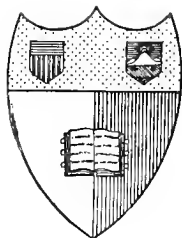




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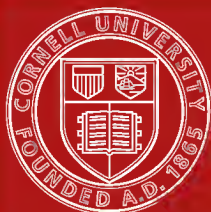
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LIFE OF THE MARQUESS OF RIPON, K.G.







Emery Walker ph.

*The First Earl of Ripon  
from a portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence P.R.A.*







# LIFE OF THE FIRST MARQUESS OF RIPON

K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., D.C.L., ETC.

BY LUCIEN WOLF

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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BOOK IV  
*THE INDIAN VICEROYALTY*



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FURNACES OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

(1880)

WITHIN little more than a fortnight of Ripon's acceptance of the Viceroyalty, he was on his way to India. The season was bad for the European voyage, and the Indian plains were, as Lytton wrote to Cranbrook, "hotter than the furnaces of Nebuchadnezzar"; but the need of an immediate change in the control of affairs at Simla was judged to be imperative on both party and political grounds. It was not merely that the Afghan question had reached a stage which touched the dividing line between Liberal and Conservative policy. The reasons lay deeper than that. India had been the most glittering theatre of Beaconsfield's romantic politics, and Lytton in his dreams and his pose had throughout his Viceroyalty been more Disraelian than his hated chief.<sup>1</sup> The result was shown in the extreme temperamental bitterness with which the whole Indian administration, and more especially Lytton himself, were assailed during the General Election. There was no more convenient or striking way of marking the change which had come over English politics, and of appeasing the rancour of the triumphant Radicals, than by the immediate recall of Lytton, and hence it was arranged that his successor should proceed to his post in spite of the excessively trying travelling conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Could anything be more Disraelian than Lytton's own account of what he had hoped to achieve in India? In a letter to Fitzjames Stephen, written at the height of the Tory *débacle*, he avows "the fancy prospect I had painted on the blank wall of the future of bequeathing to India the supremacy of Central Asia and the revenues of a first-class Power" (Balfour: *Letters of Lytton*, vol. ii, p. 200).

Lytton afterwards professed great indignation at the unceremonious way in which he was replaced, and Lady Betty Balfour, in her memoir of her father, even complains that he was "treated with contempt."<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, he was quite prepared for the action of the new Government, and was persuaded of its reasonableness, for he placed his resignation in the hands of Lord Beaconsfield before the General Election was over, and in subsequent letters to Cranbrook he even argued the case for his own prompt recall with convincing force. Thus he writes :

"I suppose that my successor, whoever he be, can scarcely reach India before June, which will be a very trying season for his journey, as well as for mine. But it is extremely desirable that he should relieve me without any avoidable delay. For the safe solution of the Afghan question now seems likely to depend on the management during the next two months of arrangements at Kandahar and negotiations at Kabul, which can neither be suspended nor postponed with impunity, nor yet satisfactorily conducted by a Viceroy notoriously destitute of the confidence and support of the Queen's constitutional advisers."<sup>2</sup>

The Government could not have required a better case. A fortnight later, however, he changed his mind.

"I do not think that my successor could, without serious risk to his health, come out earlier than next autumn, for till then the plains of India will be hotter than the furnaces of Nebuchadnezzar; and if Her Majesty's new ministers wish me to carry on this Government till I can personally transfer it to the new

<sup>1</sup> Balfour: *Letters of Lytton*, vol. ii, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Cranbrook, April 7, 1880 (Balfour: *Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 420).

Viceroy, I shall deem it a public duty to do so, provided only that during the interval, which must be virtually a sort of interregnum, I am not required to carry out measures to which it would be obviously impossible for me to set my hand. Certainly there could scarcely be a worse or more dangerous moment than the present for any radical change of Government in India ; and, as in the conduct of this Government I have never had any other feeling than a most earnest desire to do my best and utmost for the interests of India and the service of the Crown, so I trust I should be sustained by the same motive if required to carry on the Government of India till the cool season is sufficiently advanced to enable my successor to relieve me of it without risking his life.”<sup>1</sup>

This offer was not calculated to commend itself to the impatient temper of the new men in Downing Street, even if it had not been irreconcilable with the urgency of the Afghan situation as depicted in the previous letter. It was, however, not destined to have any effect, for, before it reached London, Lytton had already been informed that Ripon would come out at once. Thereupon his anger blazed forth, and he telegraphed to Hartington protesting against the “ indecent haste ” of the Government, and threatening a “ grave scandal ” if they should persist in it. The only result was to confirm the decision already arrived at. Hartington submitted the telegram to the Cabinet, and they came to the conclusion that Lytton “ should be left to do mischief for as short a time as possible.” Accordingly, Ripon was instructed “ to start on the day originally fixed.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> April 20 (Balfour : *Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 422-3).

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence with the Secretary of State* (1880), part i, pp. 1-2. Cf. Ripon to his wife, June 28, 1880.

His preparations were soon completed, and he left London on May 14, accompanied by an excellent staff. His one unfortunate choice was that of Colonel Gordon, whom he had appointed his private secretary, apparently for no other reason than that he admired his public spirit and pious unselfishness. Those who knew Gordon were not less astonished at his acceptance of the post than they were at Ripon's offer of it. There is reason to believe that on both sides some obscure mystical motives were at work.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, Gordon seems to have as completely misunderstood the nature of the post he was undertaking as Ripon miscalculated his qualifications for it. Several friends ventured to suggest to Ripon that he had not acted wisely, and the Foreign Office asked Dilke to see him and warn him "that he would find Gordon too excitable to be possible as a secretary."<sup>2</sup> These warnings found some justification in Gordon's eccentric conduct even before he embarked for India. At the farewell dinner Ripon gave in Carlton Gardens a few days before his departure, Gordon astonished his host and the whole company by insisting on taking all the items of the menu on the same plate. When he was expostulated with he said: "We shall have to rough it out in India, you know, so I may as well begin now." Nevertheless, Ripon remained satisfied with his choice. During the journey out Gordon did his work admirably, and established the most delightful relations with all his colleagues, not excepting Father Kerr, the Viceroy's Jesuit Chaplain. The sequel will be told presently.

‡ Ripon sent a full and detailed account of his experiences during the voyage to his wife in almost daily

<sup>1</sup> Ripon afterwards told W. T. Stead that Northbrook had recommended him to appoint Gordon (*Review of Reviews*, November 1908), but this was clearly an error. Northbrook was as dubious as everybody else (*Corr. in England* (1880), part i, p. 21). The story goes that when Gordon accepted the appointment, he said that he did so "in obedience to a message from Heaven."

<sup>2</sup> Gwynn: *Life of Sir C. W. Dilke*, vol. i, p. 326.



letters, but they have little value as travel pictures. They are of an extremely intimate character, and they are chiefly interesting as showing, in the first place, how well he stood the trying voyage, and, secondly, the particular state of physical, mental, and moral health in which he approached his great task. Lytton's prophecy that he would risk his life by undertaking the journey when he did was completely falsified. Both in the Red Sea and on the Indian plains the heat was in truth all that Lytton pictured it, and almost all the members of the Viceregal staff were at one time or another in the doctor's hands ; but Ripon not only did not suffer—he actually flourished. To calm his wife's anxieties he gives, in his letters, the minutest accounts of this miracle, and there is no reason to believe that his story was not scrupulously exact. Here are a few extracts :

*To Lady Ripon*

*S.S. Ancona, 29 May 1880.*—I am, I am thankful to say, very well, indeed decidedly better than when I started, though pretty constantly uncomfortable from being perpetually sticky, but in *all* important matters I am remarkably well and keep up my appetite in spite of all things.

*Jubbulpore, June 6, 1880.*—The night was hot and to-day is a real stinger—the greatest heat I have ever yet felt. . . . I am still getting on very well, no headache, not a sign of fever. The heat of yesterday made me sleepy ; but to-day I am very brisk. The dust in the railway last night was horrid, but I slept through it all. . . . Is it not curious that I have never had a headache since I left England ?

*Simla, 8 June 1880.*—I have arrived here quite safe and in perfect health, and without contretemps of any kind to me or any of my staff. I am most grateful to God, who has watched over us during our long journey

and shielded us from every evil. I have never felt better in my life ; it is really wonderful. I think I am the freshest of the party.

Before proceeding to Simla, Ripon spent three days at Bombay, where he made a very favourable impression by an admirably unaffected speech in reply to the welcome of the Corporation, and by the active interest he displayed in the public institutions of the city. " I was very glad to hear good news of your arrival at Bombay," writes Northbrook, " and the *Standard* gives a summary of your excellent answer to the address you received, adding that it has given great satisfaction, so that you have made a most satisfactory beginning of your career." <sup>1</sup> On the very day, however, that Northbrook was writing these words, Ripon had his first taste of trouble. It came in the shape of the resignation of Gordon. He thus tells the story in a letter to his wife :

*To Lady Ripon*

3d June.

Yesterday evening just before dinner Beresford <sup>2</sup> came to me with a letter in his hand and said that he had bad news for me. I immediately thought of you and Olly and my heart sank within me, but on opening the letter I found that it was one from Gordon resigning the Private Secretaryship. The announcement, therefore, which under other circumstances might have been disturbing, came to me as an absolute relief. He said in the letter that he found that the duties of the post were not in his line, and that he thought it better to resign at once. We have had no kind of difference and

<sup>1</sup> June 3, 1880. *Corr. in England* (1880), part i, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Lord William Beresford, then A.D.C. to Lytton. He later became Military Secretary to Ripon, and filled the same post under the two succeeding Viceroys, Dufferin and Lansdowne.

part quite good friends. He has written a very characteristic letter to the newspapers here, very laudatory of me, which at least shows that he has resigned from no quarrel with, or want of confidence in, me, and also that he is not fit for the place.

I have made no attempt to keep him, first, because if the work is not congenial to him he would not do it well, and secondly, because it seems to me better that he should resign now before I have really entered upon my work rather than a few weeks or months hence, when it would be sure to be said that he had either disapproved of my policy, or found me out to be an impostor, or quarrelled about religion. It is quite clear that the appointment would not have suited him and that his resignation would have been inevitable in a short time.

It is of course a disappointment to me, and shows that I made a bad selection in offering the post to him, and it is very probable that in spite of his letter the Press will make unpleasant remarks on the subject. This, however, cannot be helped, and the affair will be soon forgotten—so I mean to do my best not to worry about it.

Major White will act as P.S. for the moment.

I think that what Gordon saw of the life here, the dinners, the state, etc., combined with the experience he has already had of the self-seeking, jealousy, and petty intrigue which he is likely to have to encounter, has been the actual determining cause of his resignation.

I shall telegraph to-day to Olly, and also to Hartington and Northbrook, that they may be enabled to contradict at once all false rumours.

This is fiasco the first—let us hope the next may be some way off.

Gordon's letter of resignation has not been preserved, but there can be little question that Ripon's account of his motives is accurate. He was not unconscious of the embarrassment he was causing the Viceroy, and he did his best, *more suo*, to atone for it and repair it. Not only did he thank Ripon effusively "for your kind condonement of my moral weakness,"<sup>1</sup> but he wrote an extraordinary letter of explanation to the newspapers, in the course of which he said: "God has blessed India and England in giving Lord Ripon the Viceroyalty. Depend on it, this vast country will find that, in spite of all obstacles, the rule of Lord Ripon will be blessed; for he will rule in the strength of the Lord, not of men."<sup>2</sup> He also wrote private letters to public men in England in the same strain. Whether these tributes altogether reassured public opinion may be questioned, and Ripon himself was certainly not grateful for them. But, with all his extravagances, Gordon had intervals of sound judgment, and he rendered Ripon a real service before he left Bombay by strongly urging him to ask the Egyptian Government to let him have Evelyn Baring as Financial Member of Council.<sup>3</sup> This is all the more creditable to Gordon's sagacity because he had never been on good terms with Baring while he was in Egypt.

The difficult task of finding a new Viceregal Private Secretary occupied the friendly energies of Northbrook and Halifax in London for some weeks. Eventually Lady Ripon, to the surprise of Ripon himself, selected one of the least conspicuous of the candidates, in the person of Mr. H. W. Primrose, one of Gladstone's Assistant Private Secretaries. The choice proved an admirable one, for Primrose not only served his office with eminent distinction, but he became the lifelong

<sup>1</sup> Letter, June 6, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> *Standard*, June 4, 1880.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, June 6, 1880.

friend and confidant, and eventually the executor, of his chief.<sup>1</sup>

The transfer of the Viceroyalty took place at Simla on June 8, with perfect smoothness and courtesy, though Ripon—somewhat pettishly, it must be confessed—took occasion to mark his dissent from a precedent in the ceremony which Lytton had created when he was inducted. It was all the more unfortunate because Lytton, who had completely recovered his temper, had sent a very cordial letter of welcome to meet Ripon at Aden,<sup>2</sup> and throughout his stay at Simla behaved with faultless tact and correctness. Of the ceremony and the meeting Ripon writes to his wife :

*To Lady Ripon*

June 8, 1880.

On arriving at this House I was received on the steps by Sir R. Egerton, L<sup>t</sup> Gov<sup>r</sup> of the Punjaub (in whose Province this place is), and conducted by him to a tent just opposite, where Lytton was. He introduced me to all the notabilities, Maharajahs (including Pattiala, a nice little boy), Rajahs, Members of Council, Staff, etc., etc.; and then I was conducted to the Council Chamber, where my Commission was read by the Home Sec<sup>r</sup>, and I took my seat as Gov<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup>. Lytton on taking his seat made a speech, but it was an innovation—and I had previously determined to return to the old practice—so I said nothing, and the ceremony was over. I then went to Lady Lytton's room for tea—made acquaintance with her—and after a few minutes Lytton brought me to my room. Nothing could be kinder or civiller than they both were, so I hope and expect that all will go on well.

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. in England* (1880), part i, pp. 21-2, 29, 31-2; Ripon to his wife, June 28, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Dated May 10, 1880 (*Letters of Lytton*, vol. ii, p. 204).

I told Maj<sup>r</sup> White to say that I wished Lytton to have the same guards and honours during his stay here as if he were Gov<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup>, but he very rightly declined them. I was right to offer, and he right to refuse. I find since that he has accepted them.

Happily all did go well, and Lady Lytton noted in her diary that she and her husband received "cordial civility" from Ripon, and that "these last days at Simla, spent alone with their children, were not otherwise than enjoyable."<sup>1</sup> So far as Ripon was concerned, the civilities were clearly not over sincere. He writes to Northbrook :<sup>2</sup>

"You say that you think I must have had no very pleasant time of it with Lytton in my immediate neighbourhood. Not at all. I was determined to falsify his prophesies of 'scandal,' and I succeeded to my heart's content. He acknowledged in the fullest terms that he had been treated with every consideration; and, so far as I was concerned, he might have stayed here for ever if he had liked."

Ripon was certainly not disposed to do justice to Lytton. His letters about this time bear clear evidence of his dislike of the man, and even of some eagerness to find in his policy traces of downright dishonesty.<sup>3</sup> It was a symptom of Radical prejudice which was much too common in the days of the fierce struggle against the Disraelians, and it is regrettable that Ripon, like Gladstone himself, never rose above it. And yet, strange to say, he was not far removed from Lytton in the things that both held most precious in life, and

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Lytton*, vol. ii, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> *Corr. in England* (1880), part ii, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Letters to Lady Ripon, May 19 and September 20, 1880.

for which Gladstone would have been ready to confound them in a common ban of excommunication. For Lytton, as he confessed to Wilfrid Ward, had gone far on the road to the conversion to Roman Catholicism which Ripon had so recently traversed.<sup>1</sup> As for his politics, it is true that it rested more upon expediency than upon abstract ethical principle, but his own defence of it shows that it was none the less lofty and patriotic on that account.<sup>2</sup>

One of Ripon's efforts to mark the difference between himself and his predecessor gave Lytton the opportunity for a mild retaliation. The effort in question is described in a letter Ripon wrote to his wife, in which he told her that he proposed spending £2,000 on a diamond necklace for her.<sup>3</sup>

“Don't think by this that I am becoming very 'kingly'—on the contrary, I am cutting down the swagger as much as I can, and walking about in a shooting jacket and dispensing with Body Guards as much as possible. It is absurd to keep up much of that sort of thing up here—a certain amount of state is necessary at Calcutta, and when you have big carriages and 4 horses, outriders and guards come naturally—but up here it is quite different, and I am trying to revert, as much as I am allowed, to the older and simpler precedents.”

When Lytton got to London, he called on Lady Ripon and was very “nice,” but he seems to have frightened her by telling very sweetly how her husband, in his simple and brave way, was in the habit of wandering about the hills alone. She called for an immediate explanation, and Ripon had to confess that he “never

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Lytton*, vol. ii, pp. 391-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250-1.

<sup>3</sup> July 11, 1880.

put his nose out of doors " without being accompanied by at least a member of his staff and a policeman.<sup>1</sup>

In setting forth on his Viceregal career, Ripon possessed one inestimable advantage in the religious peace which he had found through his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. Of this we have the most interesting self-revelation in his letters to his wife. At the end of his first spell of work at Simla he writes :<sup>2</sup>

" One thing is wonderful, and is due to the influence of religion : I have not ever since I came here been worried or snappy, and even when I have had big decisions to take involving much responsibility and criticism, I have been really *quite* quiet."

Ten days later he enlarges on the same theme :<sup>3</sup>

" I am really very much surprized at myself—at my calmness and freedom from worry. I would not say this to others, but you will know that I do not say it from vanity, but I am convinced that I never was so fit for work in my life as I am now. I do not mean by this that there is anything remarkable about me, but simply that I am at my best, poor though that best may be. . . . The power of the Viceroy is really terribly great—greater than I expected. Office in England is a bagatelle compared to it. I feel continually, who is sufficient for such a task? but I keep, as I have said, quiet under it, because I endeavour to the utmost to strive simply to do God's Will and to discharge my duty. I know only too well how grievously I fall short of the ideal which I thus set before me, but neverthe-

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Lady Ripon, September 10, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, June 24, 1880.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, July 4, 1880.



less the pursuit of it gives me a totally different feeling from the feverish, restless anxiety which results from an effort after *success*, whether for one's own benefit or even for the sake of one's work itself."

Again, after the disaster at Maiwand :<sup>1</sup>

" I will begin by telling you that I am *quite* well and in good heart. God is wonderfully merciful to me in the midst of all the anxieties which press upon me just now, and I can truly say that I have worried myself in all the old days much more about the merest trifles than I am doing now in these real difficulties—in fact, I am not worried at all—I really hardly know what has come to me. I may say to you what I would not say to others, that I have never lost my calmness for a moment; and that except for about an hour the first evening after the bad news came, I have never been even in low spirits.

In health I have seldom been so well in my life. I sleep perfectly and find that I can get through a hard day's work better than I ever could."

Thus were the fears of Exeter Hall disproved and Ripon's "apostasy" had itself become "the cornerstone of the building." No one who has taken the measure of his character and abilities will doubt for a moment that the whole success of his Viceroyalty was governed by the moral and mental serenity he had found—rightly or wrongly—in the solution of his religious doubts.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Lady Ripon, August 3, 1880.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE AFGHAN QUESTION

(1880)

THE first task of the new Viceroy was to deal with the Afghan Question in the spirit of the General Election at home, in which, as we have seen, it was a leading issue. During the first six months this question overshadowed all other Indian questions, and by far the greater part of Ripon's correspondence with Hartington during this period is devoted to it.

The problem was as complicated as it was perilous. The late Amir Sher Ali had, since 1873, become increasingly alienated from the British, owing, in the first place, to the refusal of Lord Northbrook to give him the complete assurance of protection which he desired,<sup>1</sup> and, in the second place, to Lytton's policy which, until the Peshawar Conference in 1877, aimed at enforcing British influence at Kabul, and especially at making the Amir admit British agents into his country. On the failure of that Conference, however, Lytton's policy changed. In a letter to Cavagnari he wrote with strange cynicism: "It is rather the gradual disintegration and weakening than the consolidation and the establishment of the Afghan power at which we must now begin to aim."<sup>2</sup> He had already, in 1876, concluded a treaty with the Khan of Khelat and occupied Quetta: he now established a political agent at Gilgit.<sup>3</sup> Sher Ali's reception of a Russian mission

<sup>1</sup> Balfour: *Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166; cf. p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Sandeman*, chap. x; *Lytton*, pp. 184-5.

in 1878 and his repulse of a British Mission led to the Second Afghan War, which resulted in the flight of the Amir, who died shortly afterwards, and the succession of his son Yakub. The treaty of Gundamuk concluded with Yakub was a temporary return to Lytton's first policy. It assigned to India, Pishin and Sibi in the south, and Kuram, together with rights in the Khyber and Michni Passes, in the north, and gave us the right to keep a permanent Resident at Kabul and to send agents to the Afghan frontiers.<sup>1</sup> But the massacre of Cavagnari's Mission (September 1879), followed by the British occupation of Kabul and Kandahar, and the removal of Yakub, marked Lytton's final abandonment of his earlier policy. In his Dispatch No. 3 of January 7, 1880, he points out that the different provinces of Afghanistan had not shown any tendency to union in the past, and that Dost Mahomed and Sher Ali had only kept them together by hard fighting. Since, therefore, there was little prospect of union being now restored, British efforts should be bent towards "maintaining a dominant influence on those provinces which form the outworks of our Indian Empire by holding such military positions as may be necessary."<sup>2</sup> This he proposed to do by :

1. Separating Kandahar from Kabul and placing it under a native ruler supported by a British garrison.
2. Evacuating Kabul, the military occupation of which would be difficult and expensive, but retaining a hold on it by the occupation of the Kuram. (Before evacuation, it would be desirable to establish some kind of native administration, as to leave it in a state of sheer anarchy would be inconvenient to ourselves.)
3. Retaining Sibi and Pishin, and possibly

<sup>1</sup> *Lytton*, pp. 317-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Parl. Pap. Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1881), p. 4.

leaving Herat to Persia. (In his last Minute, Lytton recommends that the Amir should be allowed to take Herat if he can.<sup>1</sup>)

In accordance with the first of these proposals, a member of the old ruling race, Sher Ali Khan, was established at Kandahar as Wali by Sir Donald Stewart, while, for Kabul, Lytton opened negotiations with Abdur Rahman, a son of the late Amir Sher Ali's half-brother. Abdur Rahman for the past ten years had been living as a Russian pensioner at Tashkend, but on the removal of Yakub he had, with the encouragement of the Russians, started to try his fortune in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

This was the situation when the fall of Lord Beaconsfield's Government brought Lytton's Viceroyalty to an end. The aim of the new Ministry was, without too sudden a reversal of policy, to effect a return to the old Sind Frontier. But at every turn they found themselves hampered by pledges given by Lytton's officers to native chiefs and tribes. We were pledged to continue negotiations with Abdur Rahman, to maintain the Wali, to protect the Khan of Khelat, and to protect various tribes in the Kuram and the Khyber from falling under the power of Kabul.<sup>3</sup> In general, Lytton's legacy was full of trouble for Ripon. A few days after his arrival at Simla he writes to Hartington :

“ . . . The root of the evil<sup>4</sup> appears to me to lie in the fact that Lytton has all along steadily shut his eyes to the liabilities, political, military, and financial, in which he was involving himself. . . . The coercion of Sher Ali was to be an easy matter, the Treaty of

<sup>1</sup> *Lytton*, p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 409-12 ; *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1881), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1881), pp. 30, 58.

<sup>4</sup> The specific question referred to was the error in the Estimates (*infra*, pp. 70-1).

Gundamuk settled everything. Cavagnari's murder was to be speedily avenged. Until at length, as the complications increased and the difficulties thickened, he became utterly sick of the whole business, and for some time his only desire has been to get out of the affair almost anyhow. You are perfectly right when you say in your letter of May 21 that 'he is more anxious to retire from Kabul and Northern Afghanistan without leaving behind him any settlement than we are.'<sup>1</sup>

The mischief, however, reached further back than this. In the following February Ripon sent Hartington "a set of very curious documents" showing that in 1876 Lytton and the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Frederick Haines<sup>2</sup>) were discussing whether, in the event of a war with Russia, they should, or should not, annex the whole of Afghanistan. The idea seems to have been to attack Russia in Central Asia; but the force proposed (30,000 men) was so palpably inadequate for the purpose that Ripon suspects that, in Lytton's mind at least, the idea was to use the pretext of a Russian scare to cover the preparation of a force to conquer Afghanistan. "No man who reads these papers," he adds, "can doubt that the annexation, virtual or actual, of Afghanistan was a foregone conclusion when Lytton came out, though he was anxious not to fix public attention on his schemes."<sup>3</sup>

Nor was this all. Writing on Kashmir in April, Ripon says :

"... What designs Lytton may have harboured with respect to Kashmir, I cannot tell. It would not

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, June 14, 1880 (*Corr. with Secretary of State*, 1880, part ii, p. 11).

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards a Field-Marshal (1890). He was Commander-in-Chief in India 1875-81 (see *Life*, by Rait).

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Hartington, February 27, 1881 (*ibid.* 1881, part ii, pp. 38-9). On the other hand, it has been freely stated that the idea of the expedition originated with Sir George Colley.

surprise me to find that schemes were in preparation by the late Govt. for the annexation of the moon." <sup>1</sup>

So far as Afghanistan was concerned, Ripon's mind was already made up. In a Memorandum dated May 9, 1880, given by him to Hartington before he left London, he had laid down the principal points of his proposed Afghan policy.<sup>2</sup> They were :

1. Evacuation of Kandahar, so far as consistent with our pledges to the Wali.
2. Retention of Sibi and Pishin and continuation of the railway to Pishin. (This railway had been sanctioned in 1879 and was now completed as far as Sibi.)<sup>3</sup>
3. Evacuation of Kabul and establishment of a ruler (probably Abdur Rahman, but possibly Yakub, at that time a *détenu* in India), to be aided by grants of money and arms but not by troops. A native (not a British) agent to be kept at Kabul.
4. The ruler of Afghanistan to be allowed to take Herat if he can.
5. The policy of disintegration to be repudiated.

Ripon carried out every point of this programme, and they were all substantially maintained by his successors "up to the third" Afghan War of 1919.

The problems of immediate urgency with which he had to deal on his arrival at Simla were the conclusion of negotiations with Abdur Rahman, involving the withdrawal of the British force from Kabul, and the menace to Kandahar from Herat, where Ayub Khan, the brother of Yakub, was said to be preparing an invasion.

In the first of these problems he followed the lines laid down by Lytton, for though it was his ultimate

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, April 20, 1881; Postscript, dated April 23 (ibid., p. 83).

<sup>2</sup> *Corr. with Secretary of State*, 1880 (part ii, p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> *Sandeman*, p. 142.

intention to let Abdur Rahman have Kandahar if possible, he refused to discuss any such concessions during the negotiations.<sup>1</sup> Abdur Rahman was at the time at Khanabad, beyond the Hindu Kush, and the early negotiations had been conducted between him and Lepel Griffin<sup>2</sup> through an envoy, Afzul Khan. Abdur Rahman had asked the following questions, and the Government of India had awaited Ripon's arrival before replying :<sup>3</sup>

1. Would he get Kandahar ?
2. Would he be compelled to receive a European envoy ?
3. What enemies would he be expected to repel, and what assistance might he expect from us ?

Before Ripon's reply was sent, communications were received from Kabul to the effect that Abdur Rahman was raising the country against us. General Stewart<sup>4</sup> and Griffin were alarmed at the situation, and inclined to break off negotiations and put up Yakub for the Amirship.<sup>5</sup>

As we have seen, Ripon was not, as Lytton had been, irrevocably opposed to Yakub's restoration. He was not convinced of Yakub's complicity with the Cavagnari massacres,<sup>6</sup> and Yakub was undoubtedly the more popular candidate, to say nothing of Abdur Rahman's Russian sympathies. Ripon was even inclined to think that it had been a mistake altogether to take up Abdur Rahman.<sup>7</sup> But in the circumstances he felt we were not

<sup>1</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur Rahman*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Then Chief Political Officer with Generals Stewart and Robert sat Kabul. Sir Lepel Griffin, K.C.S.I., was afterwards British Resident at Indore and Hyderabad.

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 1, 1881, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> In supreme command in Afghanistan, Sir Donald Stewart, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., was Commander-in-Chief in India and Member of the Council of the Secretary of State. He was promoted a Field-Marshal in 1894. (See *Life*, by Elmslie.)

<sup>5</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur Rahman*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Hartington, June 14, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 6).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

justified in breaking with him yet. Accordingly, Griffin was directed to reply that we were not prepared to discuss the return of Kandahar or of the territories acquired under the Treaty of Gundamuk; that we would not insist on a European envoy; that there could be no question of relations with other foreign powers; and that if Abdur Rahman followed our advice in regard to external relations, we would help him against unprovoked foreign aggression.<sup>1</sup>

The rejoinder<sup>2</sup> ingeniously shirked the question of Kandahar by thanking us for restoring "the territory settled by treaty with Dost Mahomed."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Abdur Rahman circulated among the tribes a proclamation which clearly gave them to understand that he was to have Kandahar. As Lyall<sup>4</sup> pointed out, he probably quite understood that we were not prepared to discuss the return of Kandahar, but in his precarious position he could not afford to admit as much to the tribes, and it would not have been wise of us to force him to do so.<sup>5</sup>

Telegrams now again came from Kabul, saying that Abdur Rahman was playing us false, and urging that negotiations should be broken off before he got any stronger. Ripon took the serious responsibility—in which his Council supported him unanimously—of rejecting for a second time the advice of the men on the spot.<sup>6</sup> He instructed Griffin to send Abdur Rahman a courteous reply, suggesting that he should come at once to Kabul, and hinting that we knew all about his double game.

<sup>1</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>3</sup> We had made two treaties with Dost Mahomed, and at the time of the second Dost Mahomed had obtained Kandahar. (Letter to Hartington, June 29, 1880; *Corr.*, p. 19.)

<sup>4</sup> Sir Alfred Lyall, K.C.B., G.C.I.E., was Indian Foreign Secretary, afterwards Lieut.-Governor of the N.W. Provinces and Member of the Council of India. (See *Life*, by Durand.)

<sup>5</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur*, pp. 37, 39-41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 46; *Corr.* with Hartington, 1880, p. 20.



Should he delay to reply, Stewart was given full power to break off negotiations and to take steps to enable the leaders of the party of the late Sher Ali to set up such Government as they could, but not to enter into any *engagement* with another candidate. The paramount object was to get the troops out of Afghanistan: to leave a settled Government behind was of secondary importance. In his letter of June 30 to Stewart he says :

“ I am afraid that when you received our telegram of yesterday you will have thought us very obstinate fellows here for adhering so determinedly to our desire to come to terms with Abdur Rahman, if possible ; but it seems to me that the reasons I gave you (i.e. that we had gone too far, and that the only alternative candidate was the undesirable Yakub) still remain in force, while there is an additional consideration. . . . I cannot help thinking that it is more probable than Mr. Griffin appears to suppose that if we make Abdur Rahman our open enemy, he will nevertheless be able to retain his hold on Turkestan and Badakshan, and I need not point out to you the serious inconveniences . . . which would be likely to arise from having those districts held by a man opposed to us and intimately connected with the Russians ; they would become hotbeds of intrigue and mischief. . . .

. . . The more I have become acquainted with the state of affairs in Afghanistan the more has the conviction been forced on my mind that, do what we may, our withdrawal from the country is almost certain to be followed by a period of fighting and confusion.”<sup>1</sup>

As, however, Stewart had pointed out, anarchy at Kabul did not, owing to the village organization of

<sup>1</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur*, p. 44.

the country, disorganize life elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Had the negotiations with Abdur Rahman failed, it was Ripon's intention sedulously to avoid any appearance of supporting any other candidate who might embarrass us by clinging to us when it was our one desire to clear out as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup> However, Griffin's suspicions of Abdur Rahman were not justified, inasmuch as the latter replied frankly that he had to preserve a bellicose demeanour to satisfy the tribes, but that this did not represent his true attitude.<sup>3</sup> He showed his good faith by starting for Kabul, and on July 19 he reached Charikar, about fifty miles from the city. On the 22nd a Durbar was held at Kabul, at which he was recognized as Amir with every sign of popular sympathy.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from formal recognition, our support of Abdur Rahman consisted of a money gift of 15 lakhs (besides 9½ lakhs which had been left at Kabul by Yakub) and some guns.<sup>5</sup> The latter, in Stewart's opinion, were hardly safe to fire. Ripon's note to Lyall—"if there are any rifles standing in the same category as the guns we are going to give him, they might *perhaps* be handed over, but we must not make him too strong in arms"—shows, therefore, a commendable caution.<sup>6</sup>

The Amir's behaviour was in every way satisfactory. When the news of Maiwand arrived, six days after the Durbar, and Roberts's column left for the relief of Kandahar, he aided with transport and used his influence to quiet the tribes along the line of route. This was natural, as he was equally anxious for the defeat of Ayub, his most dangerous rival, and for the speedy departure of the British from Kabul.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120. See also Ripon's Minute, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 354; *Negotiations with Abdur*, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur*, pp. 119, 123.

As regards the latter, agreement was complete all round. It had been decided that the entire British force should retire as soon as the season admitted of this being done, with due respect for sanitary considerations. The Radicals at home were, of course, bent on the evacuation, and even the Lyttonites, as has been shown, were scarcely less eager for it. Abdur Rahman wished us to go, so that his accession might be associated with the deliverance of his countrymen from English occupation. The return to India was conducted without a hitch. The population at this time were not unfriendly towards the English, especially as they were convinced that we were really going, and they showed no desire, as Lyall said, to "tread on the snake's tail."

Nevertheless, we declined for the present to enter into a formal treaty with the Amir, much as he would have liked it, but we gave him a letter promising him aid against foreign aggression on much the same conditions as we had made with Sher Ali in 1873. The question of Kandahar and the territory occupied by us under the Treaty of Gundamak was left vague—an arrangement which for the moment suited us and the Amir equally well.<sup>1</sup>

The general opinion was that Abdur Rahman would not hold his own, as our recognition of him would make him unpopular. "Let the Mullahs," said Neville Chamberlain, "but pronounce the word 'Kaffir,' and he will be lucky if he escapes across the Hindu Kush again." Nevertheless, he occupied Kabul on our evacuation without serious opposition, and in a year's time was so firmly established that he could leave the city to attack the victorious Ayub at Kandahar.

The second problem went less smoothly. On July 27 had occurred the battle of Maiwand. This disaster consisted in the rout of a brigade 2,500 strong, including one regiment of British Infantry, by an Afghan force

<sup>1</sup> *Negotiations with Abdur*, p. 110; *Afghanistan*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 40.

estimated at from 15,000 to 16,000 men.<sup>1</sup> It was speedily redeemed by Roberts, and had little effect on the ultimate course of events, but the question how far Ripon shared the responsibility for the defeat is a vexed one, and therefore the event must be dealt with here in some detail.

In March 1880 Stewart had left Kandahar to reinforce Roberts<sup>2</sup> at Kabul. He was succeeded by General Primrose with a force drawn from the Bombay army. The Bombay Sepoy was wholly untried of late years in actual warfare, and he was not drawn from the fighting castes which, in Roberts's opinion, alone could be expected to face Afghans.<sup>3</sup> Stewart, before his departure, had proclaimed Sher Ali Khan as Wali of Kandahar, with a promise of British support. It was known that Ayub Khan, a son of the late Amir Sher Ali, was contemplating an invasion of Kandahar from Herat, and the loyalty of the Wali's army was doubtful. On June 17 Sandeman, who was by far the best authority on Native feeling in Southern Afghanistan, owing to his peculiar personal influence with the Baluchis, telegraphed to Simla that the Pathans and Ghilzais in the Wali's army were in a mutinous state.<sup>4</sup> This telegram was not included in the papers presented to Parliament, and the question whether it was sent has hitherto been doubtful. Its importance, in view of the unwillingness of the Foreign Department to recognize the danger of the situation, is obvious.<sup>5</sup> Sir F. Haines had long been apprehensive of the danger of invasion in view of the weakness of Primrose's force, but the Political Officer

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, November 14, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 163).

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards the famous Lord Roberts, the most conspicuous British soldier of the later Victorian era.

<sup>3</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, Nos. 695a and 915.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 7. Sandeman all through played a most creditable part, getting the best information of the enemy's movements and helping Phayre with all the reinforcements. (Cf. letter to Hartington, p. 47: "The man who has come best out of the whole business is Sandeman.")

<sup>5</sup> *Sandeman*, p. 149.

at Kandahar (Lt.-Col. O. St. John) did not believe the various reports as to Ayub's advance, and he failed to realize the untrustworthiness of the Wali's troops and the general disaffection of the country.<sup>1</sup> The Indian Foreign Department accepted his view.

At length, however, on June 21, St. John telegraphed definite news of Ayub's departure from Herat. Ripon telegraphed to our Minister at Teheran for confirmation, which the latter gave. Ripon at once consulted the military authorities, and with the concurrence of Stewart, whose opinion was telegraphed for in view of his recent knowledge of Kandahar, it was decided to order Primrose to send a brigade to the Helmund, whither the Wali's army had already proceeded.<sup>2</sup> Reinforcements were called up by moving regiments up along the line of communications from Sind. Unfortunately, a breakdown on the railway, due to floods, retarded their arrival. By the day of the battle of Maiwand, only two regiments of native infantry had arrived at Kandahar,<sup>3</sup> and practically no reinforcements had been sent by Primrose to the detached brigade, though there is reason to believe that Burrows, its commander, had constantly urged that he should be reinforced.<sup>4</sup> On July 13 the greater part of the Wali's army mutinied. Burrows's Brigade dispersed the mutineers, but, as the latter had destroyed a quantity of stores, Burrows decided to fall back to Kusk-i-Nakhud.<sup>5</sup> In this he was also prompted by strategic reasons, for he did not consider himself strong enough to hold the Helmund position, now that the Wali's army was no longer with him. But his move had the un-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lyall's Note of November 1880 (*Afghanistan*, No. 5, 1880, p. 21). Sher Ali Khan had lost his popularity by his open acceptance from us of the rulership of Kandahar as a separate state (*Kandahar Corr.*, No. 13).

<sup>2</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 3, 1880, pp. 93, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Statement by Capt. Slade, R.A., who was on Burrows's Staff. (Letter to Hartington, p. 163.)

<sup>5</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 78.

fortunate result that he lost touch with his adversary, and there was now a danger that the latter might slip past his right flank and reach Ghuzni.<sup>1</sup> The political effect of such a move would have been disastrous, and Ripon was anxious to prevent it. This he represented to Haines: "I am quite prepared," he said, "to take the political responsibility of attacking Ayub, unless you are of opinion that it cannot be safely done as a military operation."<sup>2</sup>

Haines was in a difficult position, as, owing to the failure of Primrose to keep him properly informed, he was unable to judge as to the advisability of letting Burrows attack Ayub.<sup>3</sup> He telegraphed to Primrose for a definite opinion on this point, but the latter's reply did not arrive till the 26th. On the 22nd he telegraphed to Primrose:

"You have full liberty to attack Ayub *if you consider yourself strong enough to do so*. Government consider it of the greatest political importance that his force should be dispersed and prevented from passing on to Ghuzni."<sup>4</sup>

Burrows himself had been inclined to retire on to Kandahar, but St. John had dissuaded him.<sup>5</sup> On receipt of this telegram, which was forwarded to him by Primrose, Burrows appears to have interpreted it as a positive instruction to intercept Ayub,<sup>6</sup> and he appears to have been confirmed in this belief by St. John.<sup>7</sup> Ripon's own proposal was that Primrose should leave Kandahar in charge of a small garrison and join forces

<sup>1</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, July 21, 1880.

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 3, 1880, pp. 83, 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 337.

<sup>6</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 3, 1880, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 337.

with Burrows to attack Ayub.<sup>1</sup> This is what Stewart said he had always intended to do, had the contingency arisen in his time.<sup>2</sup> Haines and Sir E. Johnson, the Military Member of Council, however, objected to this, owing to the supreme importance of Kandahar, and Ripon, though General Greaves, the Quartermaster-General, supported him, did not press his proposal.

On the 27th Burrows, marching to intercept Ayub, came upon him at Maiwand. The fight was commenced under unfavourable conditions, and the British were hopelessly outnumbered. Some of the native troops showed great unsteadiness, and the native cavalry refused to charge after, it is true, having been heavily punished by Ayub's artillery. The result was a complete rout. Primrose shut himself up in the citadel of Kandahar, where the survivors joined him.

Haines's position was undoubtedly a hard one. He had been a consistent opponent of Lytton's policy of military adventure on the cheap, and had always regarded the Kandahar garrison as dangerously weak. In a note dated May 26 he had recommended that, as soon as certain news was received of Ayub's intention to invade Kandahar, the Bombay reserve should be mobilized, and he had further stated that the garrison was too weak to admit of detaching a brigade to the Helmund.<sup>3</sup> After the disaster, being pressed by high authorities at home, he not unnaturally quoted this document as clearing him from blame as regards the defeat. It proved, however, on inquiry that the mobilization suggested in that document had actually been carried out in advance of news about Ayub, though by an oversight the Military Department had omitted to inform the Commander-in-Chief that this had

<sup>1</sup> Memo. by Major White (*Kandahar Corr.*, No. 915). See also Ripon's Memo. No. 214, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> St. John also declared to Ripon that he had urged Primrose to adopt this course. (Ripon to Hartington, November 25, 1881.)

<sup>3</sup> Rait: *Life of Haines*, p. 296. Ripon to Hartington (1880), pp. 152, 155.

been done.<sup>1</sup> As regards the subsequent detachment of Burrows's brigade, Haines undoubtedly said in May that the Kandahar garrison was too weak for the detachment of a brigade, but when two months later it was proposed to make this move *and simultaneously to reinforce the garrison*, he assented, as has been said, without protest. That he saw the danger of the move, and deserved credit for his foresight, is unquestionable; he consented to it only on strong representations from Primrose, who in this matter, as in others, was ruled by St. John.<sup>2</sup> Haines also appears to have uttered some warning at a Council meeting on June 18, though, strangely enough, Ripon had no recollection of it.<sup>3</sup> The fact that Lyall had on the previous day received a reassuring telegram from St. John, as to the improbability of Ayub carrying out his invasion, would account for Haines's warning not having received proper attention.

On the whole, it may be said that there is no question of Ripon having disregarded any recommendation of his military advisers. This was, indeed, the verdict of everyone in India and England who knew the facts. In two cases he might have done so with advantage—on July 4 he expressed an opinion that more European troops might be sent to reinforce Primrose, and, after the mutiny of the Wali's army, he proposed that Primrose should join Burrows, leaving a small garrison only in Kandahar. Here he certainly seems to have shown a better military instinct than Haines. Apart from bad troops, bad generalship, and bad luck, the prime cause of the disaster was the subordination of military

<sup>1</sup> Rait, in his *Life of Haines*, says that the mobilization had not been carried out, but he appears to have been in possession only of the papers of the Commander-in-Chief's Department, which, for the above reason, contain no record of the mobilization having actually taken place. That it had, is proved by the Notes of the Military Department (*Kandahar Corr.*, 1880, Nos. 324 and 330, dated respectively October 11 and 12).

<sup>2</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 3, 1880, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Haines*, p. 298; *Kandahar Corr.* (1880), No. 909.



to political considerations. How deeply Ripon felt the accusations levelled against him is shown by the length of his letters to Hartington, the Duke of Cambridge, and others explaining his case. In the middle of one of the letters to Hartington he breaks off :<sup>1</sup>

“ At this period of the Viceroy’s letter the Secretary of State yawned and muttered to himself what an old prose that fellow Ripon is—a very true remark. But the Secretary of State should have remembered that the Viceroy’s character is seriously at stake in these matters, and not only his political character but his accuracy and truthfulness.”

That St. John was particularly unfortunate in his judgements cannot be denied. Hartington noticed this and was inclined to doubt the advisability of retaining him at Kandahar.<sup>2</sup> Ripon’s note to Lyall<sup>3</sup> shows that he, too, recognized this. The Queen, also, was inclined to drop on him. “ These political officers are often, she suspects, not the best military advisers.”<sup>4</sup> But St. John was undoubtedly an able political officer, and Lyall had a very high opinion of him.<sup>5</sup> So Ripon defended him.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that the relations between the military and political departments were rather strained.

“ I enclose . . . a secret despatch from St. John on the battle of Maiwand, which please must not be published, as it contains strictures on the conduct of the generals,

<sup>1</sup> October 11, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Hartington to Ripon, December 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 337.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Ripon, November 11, 1880.

<sup>5</sup> Also Stewart (Ripon to Hartington, 1881).

<sup>6</sup> To Hartington, November 14, 1880.

which coming from a 'Political' would excite a furious storm."<sup>1</sup>

After Maiwand, the question arose whether a force should be sent from Kabul to relieve Kandahar, seeing that it would probably be able to do so before a relieving force could be sent from Sind. Roberts in his *Forty-one Years in India* has expressed the opinion that the Simla authorities were at first opposed to the scheme of a march from Kabul, but, as Rait points out<sup>2</sup>—and this is fully confirmed by the Kandahar correspondence of Ripon—the only hesitation on the subject proceeded from Stewart.<sup>3</sup> The idea was suggested by Hartington in a telegram sent on the day he received the news. Ripon's reply of the 30th is based on Stewart's objections, and deprecates the idea; but as soon as Stewart changed his mind, influenced by the impossibility, as he thought, of getting reinforcements through in time by Sind, the plan was sanctioned without opposition—though there was much outside criticism—Ripon himself recording a Minute in its favour. Orders were issued for the march on August 3, and on September 3 Ayub's force was routed by Roberts outside Kandahar.<sup>4</sup>

On September 5 Ripon writes to Roberts :<sup>5</sup>

“ In my last letter to you I ventured in anticipation to say that your march would be famous in military

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, November 14, 1880, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Haines*, p. 306. Rait says that Haines had, previous to the battle, warned Ripon that it might be necessary to send a force from Kabul to Kandahar.

<sup>3</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 140.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 188 and 215. Sir J. Fergusson, Governor of Bombay, said the Bombay army could only furnish weak reinforcements, and strongly urged troops being sent from Kabul (*ibid.*, Nos. 122 164a).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 611.

history. It has more than fulfilled my expectations, and it seems to me to be one of the most remarkable exploits of the kind upon record. The criticisms upon the despatch of your force from Kabul have been noisy and confident, both in India and in England, but you have utterly refuted them and have confounded the prophets of evil. . . .”

At the same time Ripon was careful not to give Roberts any political authority during his march, his opinion of Roberts as a political officer being by no means so high as his opinion of him as a commander.<sup>1</sup>

So far Ripon had done very well, and, in spite of his critics, he was satisfied with himself. He writes to Northbrook on October 5 :

“ I really believe that I may fairly take the chief share of the credit of having decided upon the policy of sending Roberts to Kandahar and simultaneously withdrawing Stewart from Kabul. Of course both operations were suggested from various quarters ; but there was great difference of opinion with regard to their being carried out together, and in the end I made up my own mind on the morning of the 3rd Aug. and carried the thing through. I have not said as much as this about my own part in the matter to anyone but yourself ; but after the attacks which have been made upon me, I hope I may be excused for telling a friend like you the real state of the case. The man who put the matter most clearly before me, in its double aspect political and military, was Griffin.”

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington (*Corr.*, p. 52) ; *Negotiations with Abdur*, No. 201 ; *Kand. Corr.*, Nos. 257, 324, 328.

And again after Roberts's victory : <sup>1</sup>

“ I am afraid the reputation of many of the pundits of the Senior United Service Club, not to speak of yet more illustrious persons, will have suffered by the refutation of their gloomy prophecies, but it was really impossible to help it, and though I feel deeply for them I could not check Roberts's victorious career merely to prove them right.”

<sup>1</sup> September 7, 1880.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MAKING THE NEW FRONTIER

(1880-1881)

IN September, when Kabul had been safely made over to the Amir, and the danger to Kandahar removed by Roberts's victory, the Government were able to turn their attention to the question of a permanent settlement of the Frontier. The Kabul question was, of course, settled, and would not need to be reopened so long as Abdur Rahman managed to hold his own. Only the extremists of the Forward school, like Haines, viewed this with regret.<sup>1</sup> But subsidiary to the Kabul question was that of our positions on the two routes by which Kabul is approached from India—the Khyber and the Kuram.

In a Minute of May 29,<sup>2</sup> Roberts had strongly advocated our withdrawal from both these passes, coupled, it is true, with the two conditions that we should retain Kandahar and that we should guarantee the Kuram tribes against the imposition of Afghan rule. Stewart concurred in Roberts's Minute.<sup>3</sup> Haines was for abandoning the Kuram,<sup>4</sup> the value of which had been a pet theory of Lytton's Military Secretary, Colley,<sup>5</sup> but which during the recent war had proved a highly inconvenient route. He thought that we should maintain a strong position in front of the Khyber, entrusting the

<sup>1</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 2 (1881), p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 1 (1881), p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Life of Haines*, p. 282, note. Sir George Pomeroy Colley had a high reputation for military science. He was a Professor at the Staff College in 1871. He served in China and Africa, and in 1880 succeeded Wolseley as G.O.C. in the war against the Boers. He was killed at Majuba Hill.

Khyber road, if possible, to tribal guards. He also put it on record that he only assented to any withdrawal in Northern Afghanistan on the assumption that we should keep Kandahar. It should be added that the opinion of Roberts and Stewart was delivered previously to Maiwand, when our pledges to the Wali still constituted a serious obstacle to the abandonment of Kandahar. Ripon remarks upon their Minutes :<sup>1</sup>

“ This puts us on velvet as regards the military aspect of the case. . . . Roberts’s present proposals are completely different from those which he formerly advocated, and I have some reason to think that the change results from a wish on the part of Lytton and his friends to anticipate our probable policy, and be able to say that we were only following in their steps.”

Here Ripon shows a misconception of the position of the Lyttonites. They were abandoning their Northern policy in Afghanistan, which was the more vulnerable, in order to concentrate on the retention of Kandahar, where they had a much stronger case.

In their dispatch of September 24, 1880,<sup>2</sup> the Government of India adopted without objection, save for the caveat of Haines as to Kandahar, the policy proposed in Ripon’s letter to Hartington of August 21, 1880 ; namely, withdrawal from the Kuram, a guarantee to the Turis (a Kuram tribe) against interference from Kabul—in fulfilment of a pledge given them by Roberts in Lytton’s time—withdrawal from the Khyber, and the road there to be kept open by local tribes whose independence we would recognize. But the real struggle centred on the withdrawal from Kandahar. The conflicting views of the various published Minutes<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, June 22, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 16).

<sup>2</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1881), p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 2, 3, 4 (1881).

by members of both Councils and by the military experts in England may be briefly summarized.

Evacuation was supported on the following grounds :

- (1) Expense ;
- (2) Objection to deprive the Amir of the most fertile province of Afghanistan.

(These two reasons had caused Lytton to leave Kandahar to the Amir in the Treaty of Gundamak, and it was only when it was decided to withdraw from Kabul that they were, in the opinion of the " Forwards," outweighed by the necessity for maintaining a hold on Afghanistan.)

- (3) Improbability of a Russian invasion ;
- (4) Unpopularity of Afghan service with the Sepoys ;
- (5) General objection to our staying in Afghanistan, where our presence was a constant source of irritation.

For retention the following reasons were urged :

- (1) Strategic importance in case of invasion ;
- (2) Pledges given to the Wali<sup>1</sup> and the inhabitants of the Province ;
- (3) Maintenance of British influence in the country as against Russia ;
- (4) Possibilities of commercial and economic benefits ;
- (5) Undesirability of a backward move—especially in view of
  - (a) The capital already spent on the railway ;
  - (b) The fact that Kandahar was all that we had to show for the war.

(One of the strongest advocates of retention was the Duke of Cambridge, who specially influenced the Queen.<sup>2</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> It was this that chiefly exercised Ripon at first. (*Supra*, p. 20, and *infra*, p. 42.)

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Hartington, September 30, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 51).

A middle course—that of retiring from Kandahar, but retaining Pishin and Sibi—was favoured by Col. East of the British Intelligence Department, and by Sir G. Wolseley. This, as has been said, was the course advocated by Ripon. Stewart would also have agreed to it but for reasons of supply, which, he thought, favoured a position in the more fertile country of Kandahar.<sup>1</sup>

Ripon sets forth his reasons in his letter of September 11.<sup>2</sup> He would continue the railway, which had already got as far as Sibi, to the foot of the Khojak Pass, and keep a small force at Quetta or in Pishin with the sole object of protecting the railway. He explains :

“ I am happy to say that I have no expectation of either a fresh Afghan war or a Russian invasion ; but the language which, with your sanction, we have held to Abdur Rahman about foreign political interference in Afghanistan seems to me to make it necessary that, having the opportunity, we should maintain ourselves in a position in which we could without difficulty either support or control him, if occasion should arise. . . . If we give him Kandahar it will be necessary to have a treaty with him, and a strong position at Pishin would enable us to watch over the observance of that treaty from a vantage ground very favourable for the preservation of friendly relations with an Afghan ruler.”

In a word, the Pishin compromise would avoid the irritation which an occupation of Kandahar would be bound to produce, and the expense of keeping a large force in a populous and unfriendly town, while it would serve in substance all the ends of the Forward party.

The position of Sibi and Pishin was entirely different

<sup>1</sup> Ripon to Hartington, September 11, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 98).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.



from that of the other territories occupied by us after the Treaty of Gundamak. The inhabitants were on the whole a peaceable folk, and, owing to the genius of Sandeman, had settled down contentedly under our administration. They had never come under the effective rule of the Afghans, from whom they were separated ethnically and geographically, and they were glad of our protection against their more turbulent neighbours.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the retention of these districts was necessary for the protection of the Khan of Khelat, who had supported us with conspicuous loyalty throughout the war, and who justifiably relied on our continued protection. Strategically, the retention of these districts would keep us within striking distance of Kandahar, and—what Ripon failed to mention, but what Sandeman points out—it would really shorten our frontier: for the line from Dera Ghazi Khan to the impassable desert which begins at Nushki is shorter than the line from Dera to the sea.

During the autumn of 1880 Ripon was strongly urging his proposal on Hartington. A complete return to the old Sind frontier would, he thought, lead at some time to a dangerous reaction in favour of an extreme forward policy.<sup>2</sup>

“ I will venture to say that if you go back to Sind, ten years will not elapse before we shall be fighting all over again the battle of the forward policy with a very fair prospect of being involved . . . in a fourth Afghan war, whereas, if you take up the position which I advocate, you may defy all the onslaughts of the few fanatics who would prefer the retention of Kandahar.”

In the same letter he says :<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sandeman*, pp. 165-9.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, October 25, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 143).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

“ I stand to you and to the Government in a somewhat closer relation than Viceroys usually do, and I should feel bound, therefore, not to separate myself publicly from your policy except upon a very vital question indeed. But I must confess that I should feel it to be a very heavy responsibility to be called upon to exercise my power of overruling my Council in order to carry out a measure which I believe to be a mistaken one. I could only do so upon the ground that it was the duty of the Government of India to obey the orders of the Secretary of State. . . . You must not expect me to write a minute in favour of giving up our hold on the Kojak-Amran Passes. I could not honestly do that.”

Later, as will be seen, Ripon got his way. But for the time the Home Government, especially Northbrook, were obdurate against any compromise.<sup>1</sup> In the dispatch of September 11, 1880, it was definitely and formally stated: “ On the whole H.M. Government are of opinion that the case is not one in which compromise between the two conflicting lines of policy is desirable or possible.” Hartington, though inclined for complete evacuation, took a more impartial view of the whole question. On September 30 he trenchantly sums up the problem of Kandahar as follows: <sup>2</sup>

“ It turns, in my opinion, entirely on the degree of importance which is to be attached to the idea, possibility, or danger of Russian invasion of India. If we are to look on Russia as a power which may, in some not remote period, undertake the invasion of India, I conceive that the strategic advantages of holding Kandahar . . . are enormous; and not to be overborne by the expense and inconvenience which would

<sup>1</sup> Hartington to Ripon, October 7, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 54); April 1, 1881, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

be incurred. But if we do not hold this to be a contingency to be seriously taken into our calculations, all the arguments about trade, prestige, and so forth seem to me to be utterly inconclusive. I confess I am not as clear and positive on this vital point as Northbrook, Norman, and the other anti-annexationists; but on the whole I am inclined to think that the balance of opinion of reasonable men is on their side."

Ripon knew that the only member of his Council who might be counted on to support evacuation was Aitchison. He thought that he might, however, get a majority to consent to his compromise.<sup>1</sup> A telegram from Hartington received just before the Council meeting at which the question was to be discussed led him to think that the Home Government might possibly be got to accept the compromise.<sup>2</sup> The opposition of the Council, however, was stronger than he anticipated,<sup>3</sup> while Stewart, of whom he had had hopes, made it a great point that we were still in the dark as to the pledges which had been given to the Wali. He added that he himself, while in Kandahar, had guaranteed to the inhabitants that they should never be compelled to return to Kabuli dominion. Ripon was quite prepared to overrule the Council, if necessary,<sup>4</sup> but he thought the occasion was not a suitable one for doing so. He would have had both military members against him, and the plea that we did not know how we stood as regards the Wali was a plausible one. Moreover, he was not anxious that the question should be finally decided to the exclusion of the compromise which he himself desired. He agreed, therefore, that

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, April 1, 1881 (*Corr.*, p. 62).

<sup>2</sup> *Kandahar Corr.*, No. 722, p. 262b.

<sup>3</sup> To Hartington, September 25, 1880 (*Corr.*, p. 112).

<sup>4</sup> Hartington even thought it might be preferable that the Home Government should decide the matter authoritatively, as being a question of wide Imperial policy. (Letter to Ripon, September 30, 1880, *Corr.*, p. 50.)

Lyll should be sent to Kandahar to see how matters really stood as regards our pledges to the Wali and the inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

On this latter point, the events preceding Maiwand had shown that the Wali had completely failed in consolidating his rule at Kandahar, and that he could only be maintained by a powerful British force, acting in the teeth of national opposition. Common sense demanded that we should not be expected to maintain him indefinitely on such terms, seeing that our engagements had been made on the supposition that he was in a position to command the respect of his countrymen. Ripon, while seeing this, showed his "intellectual honesty" <sup>2</sup> by saying: "I feel that the political advantages of pursuing this policy . . . are so considerable that one is bound to be on the watch lest they should tempt one to snatch eagerly at insufficient excuses for escaping from our obligations to Sher Ali." However, the result of Lyll's mission was to show that the Wali himself had no idea of regarding us as pledged to maintain him. At first, indeed, he seemed inclined to think of attempting to govern Kandahar after our departure, but he soon thought better of it, and wrote asking for a pension and asylum in India, which Ripon joyfully accorded him.<sup>3</sup> As regards any promises made to the people, their murderous conduct after Maiwand and their obvious hatred of the British clearly absolved us.<sup>4</sup>

The question of evacuation was eventually decided over the heads of the Government of India by the announcement, in the Queen's Speech at the opening of the 1881 session of Parliament, that the troops would be withdrawn as soon as possible. This "satisfied our

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, September 25, 1880 (*Corr.*, pp. 113-15).

<sup>2</sup> The phrase is Mr. Bernard Holland's (*Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, vol. i, p. 304. For the quotation see Letter to Hartington, August 1, 1880, *Corr.*, p. 49.)

<sup>3</sup> Negotiations with Abdur Rahman, Nos. 351, 360, 364, 366, pp. 169-78.

<sup>4</sup> *Kand. Corr.*, No. 856, p. 319.

people" in England,<sup>1</sup> and also enabled the Government of India to take their time with the question of Pishin and Sibi. The Council, however, were sore at not having had an opportunity of expressing their views, and a "crop of minutes" sprang up, protesting against the decision of the Home Government.<sup>2</sup> Baring and Rivers Thompson wrote uncompromising minutes from opposite sides, Gibbs was in favour of the Pishin compromise, and Stokes concluded an otherwise "forward" minute by saying that Pishin would be almost as strong a position as Kandahar.<sup>3</sup> Stewart, who had already (in 1879) expressed himself strongly in favour of Pishin as against Kandahar, now wrote a minute regretting the change of policy purely on the grounds that it was a change, though he admitted that he disagreed with the old policy. Ripon took a friendly interest in this production.<sup>4</sup> He appears to have toned it down and corrected its grammar.<sup>5</sup> Rivers Thompson's minute was so violently worded that Hartington, at the instigation of the Political Committee at the India Office, wished to administer an official rebuke, but Ripon dissuaded him.<sup>6</sup>

Eventually the patient and conciliatory Viceroy won his point about Pishin and Sibi. In his letter of December 17, 1880, Hartington already showed signs of weakening, for, though unimpressed by the strategical arguments, he began to see that the withdrawal from those provinces would be disastrous to the beneficial work which we had been carrying on in Khelat and among the neighbouring tribes. Early in 1881 Sande-

<sup>1</sup> Hartington to Ripon, January 14, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, February 2, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 4, 1881.

<sup>4</sup> In spite of their disagreement Ripon got on well with Stewart. "He is a thorough soldier, very simple and straightforward" (to Hartington, *Corr.*, p. 94). "I deliberately abstained from interfering [in the minutes] except in the case of Stewart, whom I knew I could trust" (*ibid.*, May 5, 1881, p. 93). Stewart's letters in his *Life* contain many appreciatory references to Ripon.

<sup>5</sup> *Kand. Corr.*, 1881, Nos. 52, 54, 55, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> To Hartington, May 5, 1881 (*Corr.*, p. 92).

man went home and carried on an energetic campaign to prevent what would have been the ruin of his life-work. Of its effect Reginald Brett wrote to the Viceroy :<sup>1</sup>

“ After what Sandeman said it was impossible for Lord Hartington to do otherwise than agree to leave you full powers. He was never very strong about the withdrawal, but Northbrook was violently opposed to remaining, and was supported by the rest of the Cabinet, so there was nothing to be done but acquiesce. Now that the Duke of Argyll has gone, moderate counsels will probably prevail, were the question reopened, but Hartington has taken the responsibility of leaving it to you upon himself.”

So it proved. On April 1, 1881, Hartington writes :

“ The Political Committee have been pressing me to send orders hastening the departure from Pishin, but I have been in no hurry to do this, and shall be quite satisfied if we can get out of Kandahar, leaving the future of Pishin and Sibi for deliberate consideration.”

On April 29 the Secretary of State sent a dispatch in which the inexpediency of immediate retirement from Pishin was fully recognized, and no announcement of final retirement was to be required for the time being.<sup>2</sup> That time is still in being. The work on the railway, which had been suspended in view of the Government's original determination to insist on complete evacuation, was resumed in 1884.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> April 14, 1881. *Corr. with England*, 1881, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 5 (1881), p. 89. The change in the attitude of the Cabinet is said to have been due to Sir C. Dilke (*Life of Sandeman*, p. 170).

<sup>3</sup> *Sandeman*, p. 171.

Meanwhile the transfer of Kandahar to Abdur Rahman was being actively proceeded with. The Wali having expressed himself desirous of retiring, the ground was soon clear for negotiations. A hint was conveyed to the Amir in a letter of November 18, 1880, that we were willing to consider the matter, to which he replied: "What Your Excellency may have in contemplation for the well-being of Afghanistan cannot but be appropriate and good."<sup>1</sup> On January 21, 1881, the Council accepted the Secretary of State's orders for evacuation<sup>2</sup> and instructed General Hume<sup>3</sup> accordingly, and on the 30th Ripon made the Amir a definite offer to hand over Kandahar to him when we evacuated it in the early spring. The offer was similar to that made in the case of Kabul—we would hand over the place, declare our recognition of Abdur Rahman as ruler, and help him with money and artillery and ammunition. Negotiations were difficult, as the Amir, when asked to send a confidential agent, replied that "such persons do not exist in this country,"<sup>4</sup> and sent an envoy without powers to negotiate. However, he announced his intention to proceed to the occupation of the city.<sup>5</sup> Munitions of war and money were provided, and Abdur Rahman was informed that we could not undertake to hold Kandahar after April 18.<sup>6</sup> This was the latest date which, for sanitary reasons, it was safe to fix.

Unfortunately, Ayub now again became active in Herat, and envoys from him appeared at Kandahar on February 23. They were courteously received by St. John, but informed that we had decided to recognize the title of Abdur Rahman. Ripon had got leave from Hartington to let the troops stay over the summer in Kandahar, if absolutely necessary, so as to ensure that

<sup>1</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 5 (1881), pp. 11, 14, 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Kand. Corr.*, 1881, No. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Hume had succeeded Roberts at Kandahar.

<sup>4</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 5 (1881), p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

the Amir should retain Kandahar, but he decided not to avail himself of it, as, though he was doubtful as to Abdur Rahman's ability to hold his own against Ayub, he did not think that half a year's delay would improve his chances.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the evacuation was completed on April 21, and the city handed over to the Amir's officers. On July 27—the anniversary of Maiwand—the Amir's general, Ghulam Haidar, was badly defeated by Ayub near Chirishk, and Ayub proceeded to occupy Kandahar. At this stage Ripon insisted on a strict policy of non-intervention.<sup>2</sup> The British forces having by this time retired behind the Khojak, he decided on no account to allow them to return to Afghanistan. He even somewhat curtly dismissed the Machiavellian schemes of Lyall and St. John for keeping Ayub in play at Kandahar, and preventing him from moving north to attack Abdur Rahman. On the other hand, he insisted, in spite of pressure from home, in keeping Pishin strongly occupied so long as Afghan affairs were critical, and this sufficiently served the purpose of holding Ayub at Kandahar, for, being unable to guess our intentions, he was afraid to leave it.<sup>3</sup> To a suggestion that we should offer to mediate between the two combatants, Ripon replied that a divided Afghanistan was what we most wanted to avoid.<sup>4</sup> Happily, on September 22 the Amir completely defeated Ayub and broke his power finally. Having thus acquired Kandahar, he had no difficulty in adding Herat to his dominions, and the ideal of a "strong and united Afghanistan" was realized.

Throughout the negotiations as to the retirement from Kandahar and the retention of Pishin, Ripon felt the delicacy of his position as mediating between the "forward" majority in India and the non-intervention

<sup>1</sup> *Afghanistan*, No. 5 (1881), p. 69; *Kand. Corr.*, 1881, pp. 99, 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102; *Kand. Corr.*, 1881, Nos. 199, 202.

<sup>3</sup> *Kand. Corr.*, 1881, Nos. 225, 226, 228, 230.

<sup>4</sup> To Hartington, September 2, 1881 (*Corr.*, p. 194).



element in the Cabinet at home. Hartington writes on March 18, 1881 :

“ I got the Cabinet . . . to assent to the telegram giving you discretion as to time about withdrawing from Kandahar. Argyll and others made some objections—thought the main thing was to come away from Afghanistan, that for all we knew Ayub would make as good an Amir for us as Abdur Rahman. . . . There is, of course, much truth in this, but on the other hand I agree in what I understand to be your opinion, that the recognition by us of Ayub . . . would have a bad effect in India.”

When Hartington expressed uneasiness at the continued presence of our troops at Chaman and in the Khojak, Ripon replied : <sup>1</sup>

“ With respect to the retention of a post at Chaman for the present, I have only to say that Stewart thinks it advisable, and that it does not seem to me wise to interfere with the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief upon a small point of that kind. . . . You will, I trust, recollect in judging our proceedings, that in our endeavour to extricate ourselves from the Afghan imbroglio in which the rash and foolish policy of the late Government had involved us, we have had very difficult cards to play. I think we may fairly claim to have attained a certain amount of success, and if you should be of the same opinion, I am sure that you will extend to our present and future proceedings such an amount of confidence as you may think that our past conduct of those complicated affairs entitles us to receive.”

<sup>1</sup> May 15, 1881.

He was sensitive to any possible accusation that he favoured the "Forward Policy."<sup>1</sup>

"I got a letter from Northbrook from which it was clear that he, usually so fair and just, had worked himself up into a state of mind which made him see a raving jingo in every one who hesitated about returning to the 'old Sind frontier.' So far as I am concerned there is only one thing connected with this subject which I resent, and that is, that my belief in the wisdom of retaining Pishin, at all events for the present, has anything to do with the slightest indication on my part to favour a forward policy. . . . I have been chiefly actuated by the conviction that the retention of Pishin would tend to prevent complications which would afford an excuse for a resuscitation of a policy of interference in Afghan affairs. . . . Anyhow, I am sure that it is fortunate that we are in strength now in those parts. If affairs settle down quietly in S. Afghanistan, and Abdur Rahman succeeds in holding his own through the summer, it will be greatly owing to the deliberate and gradual character of our withdrawal."<sup>2</sup>

How clearly, on the other hand, he recognized the necessity of considering the feelings of "our people" is shown in the following passage in the same letter :

"I am very sensible of the forbearance which has been shown by the Party on this subject, and very grateful for it. The question is one which it is not easy for persons who are not on the spot, and who do not know

<sup>1</sup> He had to deny in the press a rumour that he had been in favour of retaining Kandahar. This denial appears to have offended the Queen, who had believed the rumour and was all for a "forward" policy herself. (Ripon to Hartington, August 26, 1881, *Corr.*, p. 190.)

<sup>2</sup> Ripon to Hartington, July 1, 1881.

our relations with Khelat and the border tribes, fully to understand ; the broad idea of retiring from every atom of what was ever Afghan territory is much more easy to grasp than the special circumstances of a particular frontier ; and I am therefore not at all surprised at the reluctance of those, with whose general views I most cordially agree, to consent to the retention of what they regard as a rag of the Lytton policy."

This reluctance was enhanced by the attitude of the Opposition, who " try to make out that we have, after all, virtually accepted their policy ; that we are still in Afghanistan and going to remain there ; and that it is not of much real importance whether it is Chaman or Pishin or Kandahar that is occupied." <sup>1</sup> The obvious answer to such criticism was that Lytton's policy was avowedly based on the weakening of the Kabul power, whereas Ripon was for strengthening it. It was not inconsistent with the latter policy to retain a tract over which the rule of Kabul had never been effectually asserted, and which by race and position was strongly distinct from Afghanistan.

As for the " Forwards " in India, Ripon's triumph was not less remarkable. It was a triumph of character and tolerant insight rather than of diplomacy. The spirit in which he acted is shown by his letters on the subject to Hartington :

" My task in managing Council, which is composed for the most part of men of very conservative tendencies, is not an easy one, and will probably become more difficult as the return of peace enables them to take up internal questions more vigorously. Hitherto I have got on very well. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Hartington to Ripon, June 10, 1881 (*Corr.*, p. 55).

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, February 2, 1881.

I find that Members of Council are frequently much more amenable after they have blown off their steam. . . . The Council like to make a show of independence, they like to be treated with a certain amount of deference, but at last they can generally be got to do what is wanted. . . . I regard the check which the Council imposes on my arbitrary will as very valuable in a Govt. to so great an extent despotic as this Govt. necessarily is. There is a very strong desire to support the Viceroy, of which I have had many proofs. . . .<sup>1</sup>

But their very readiness [he is speaking of the Vernacular Press Act] to follow the Viceroy makes them . . . afraid of being accused . . . of being nothing but dummies, and the Kandahar case was just one in which fears of that sort would tell. . . . You must remember that there was no loophole left for them. If you had consented to the retention of Pishin and Sibi I have little doubt that I could have got a majority to concur in the abandonment of Kandahar. . . . As I have said before, I think they are, if anything, too amenable to the will of the Viceroy."<sup>2</sup>

This genial temper, allied to sound knowledge and unflinching tactfulness, produced excellent results throughout what might otherwise have been a stormy and even perilous Viceroyalty.

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, March 5, 1881 (*Corr.*, No. 13).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1, 1881.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ARMY AND THE RUSSIAN MENACE

(1881-1884)

THE Afghan War had given a fresh actuality to two important Indian questions—Army Reform and the recasting of our Central Asian policy. On these questions Ripon developed strong views, and, although he was not immediately successful in enforcing them, yet in both cases they were eventually adopted.

The Army question appealed to him as an expert. It was one of his oldest hobbies, and it had occupied the larger part of his official career.<sup>1</sup> The way in which it now presented itself to him was this: A Commission had been appointed in 1879 to consider the possibility of reductions in Army expenditure. In 1881 the India Office, having "sat on" their report for over a year, sent it to India for the Government of India's remarks.<sup>2</sup> Ripon had not originally intended to introduce extensive Army reforms, but the conduct of the campaign of 1880 had engendered in him very decided opinions as to the defects of the existing system.<sup>3</sup> With the unanimous concurrence of his Council—Haines alone dissenting—he submitted to the Home Government a series of recommendations, based on the recommendations of the Commission, of which the most important, from an administrative point of view, was the abolition of the Commanders-in-Chief in Madras and Bombay.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, vol. i, Caps. V and IX.

<sup>2</sup> Rait: *Life of Haines*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Hartington, July 13, 1881.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, February 7 and 12, 1881.

This did not mean the abolition of the distinctions between the three *Armies* of Madras, Bombay, and Bengal—distinctions which, for political reasons, it was highly advisable to maintain—but it meant the abolition of the control of the Madras and Bombay Governments over the forces in their respective territories. Ripon had no difficulty in showing the disastrous effects of the system of divided control, which had led to endless friction between India and Bombay during the recent campaign. “The existence of the state of things I have been forced to describe,”<sup>1</sup> he writes to Hartington, “must be attributed, as it seems to me, to two main causes—to a system of double administration and divided responsibility, and to the exaggerated and false *esprit de corps* which that system had generated.” He complained that incompetent officers were nominated by the local government, and that the Government of India, though responsible for their appointment, had no means of judging their fitness. “One of the Brigadiers selected by the Bombay Government we had to remove because he lay in bed all day without sufficient cause—for the sake, he alleged, of warmth, his only apparent illness, as reported by the medical officer who examined him, being a very mild type of boils on the fingers.” As for the *esprit de corps*, the people in Bombay “seemed a great deal more anxious to fight the Bengal Army than the enemy” and “talked of Maiwand as if it had been a great victory, until I believe they are really convinced that a great victory it was, just as George IV talked himself into a belief that he led a cavalry charge at Waterloo. They attribute all criticism to the malignant jealousy of ‘Bengal’ . . . and refuse even to enquire into the meaning of so startling a phenomenon as the defeat at Maiwand.”

The existing system, however, had its defenders, and they constituted a majority on Hartington’s Council. Ripon had more than one quarrel with the Council—

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, July 18, 1881.

notably on railway questions—and was apt to disparage their activities :

“ What is the use of a Liberal Govt., so far as India is concerned, if it is to give itself up bound hand and foot to the guidance of a set of old gentlemen, whose energies are relaxed by age, and who, having excellent salaries, and no responsibility, amuse themselves by criticizing the proposals and obstructing the plans of those who have the most recent knowledge of the real state of India, and who have on their shoulders the whole responsibility for the good government of that country ? ”<sup>1</sup>

The Duke of Cambridge was also strongly opposed to the new scheme and bluntly conveyed his displeasure to the Viceroy :

“ I was in hopes that that dreadful Army Commission would have been *pigeonholed* on your assuming office, at all events such portions as I believe to be most dangerous for our interests in our great Indian empire. But, alas ! in this I have been mistaken, and it surprises me more than I can express. I cannot imagine how with your great experience of military matters here at home you did not feel that it was impossible for the Home Government to bring back on Imperial establishment European regiments which you proposed to reduce in India. . . . Again, I should have hoped that you would have seen how all-important it was to *retain* the three distinct Native Presidential armies, each with its Commander-in-Chief, these officers retaining their seats in the local presidential Councils.”<sup>2</sup>

Ripon replied with characteristic sturdiness :

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, September 14, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> February 3, 1882.

“ The experience of the late war in Afghanistan showed to my mind conclusively that our present cadres were too weak. . . . But if the strength of our European cadres ought to be increased, how is it to be done ? It is impossible for the finances of India to bear the burden of additional military expenditure. Every branch of our civil administration is already starved . . . and therefore, if our cadres are to be increased in strength, it can only be done by diminishing their number. But then your Royal Highness presses upon me that if we send home from hence batteries and regiments and battalions they will be disbanded. That I venture to say is not my business. . . . If it is necessary for English objects to maintain a more expensive military organization in India than India herself requires, then I say distinctly that England ought to pay for the extra cost. . . . I am quite ready that India should pay the whole cost of the military organization required by, and suited to, her circumstances and condition ; but I am not ready, if Your Royal Highness will pardon me for saying so, to be a consenting party to taxing the people of the country, who are a very poor people, merely to save the pockets of the richer taxpayers at home.”<sup>1</sup>

Hartington expressed himself personally in agreement with Ripon,<sup>2</sup> but he was at that time too busy with the House of Commons to give as much attention to Indian affairs as the Viceroy would have liked. Moreover, the abolition of the Presidency commands would have necessitated legislation in England, and at that time there was unprecedented congestion in the House of Commons.<sup>3</sup> Consequently the latter scheme was hung up till 1893, when the necessary law was

<sup>1</sup> July 6, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Ripon, December 29, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, June 24, 1881.



enacted, and the Commands were abolished two years later, precisely as Ripon had proposed.<sup>1</sup>

The proposals for the reduction of expenditure were adopted, so far as British troops were concerned,<sup>2</sup> in part only, owing to the offence which would have been given to military susceptibilities at home. Ripon, as we have seen, resented strongly this subordination, as he thought, of Indian interests to those of English politicians and taxpayers.

Still more strongly did he resent the injustice of a proposal that India should bear the entire cost of the contingent sent by her to Egypt in 1882 to put down the Arabi rebellion. In this controversy he found himself in the painful position of having for his principal opponent Gladstone, whom on other occasions he always refers to as his most sympathetic supporter. Gladstone, as Hartington writes, "had some rather vague notions which are difficult to meet, because they are vague, that the British taxpayer is already enormously saddled with military expenditure on account of India, and that but for India large reductions could be made,"<sup>3</sup> and he thought that the value of the Suez Canal to India was a sufficient reason for charging her with a share of the cost of the Egyptian war proportionate to the number of troops supplied by her. Ripon and the Government of India entirely repudiated this argument, and Ripon stated their case to Hartington with his usual frankness :<sup>4</sup>

"You say that Gladstone has some rather vague notions . . . that the British Taxpayer is already enormously saddled with Military expenditure on account of India, and that but for India large reduc-

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Haines*, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> So far as Indian troops were concerned, India was independent of the War Office.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Hartington, January 12, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, February 3, 1882.

tions could be made. I think I know what Gladstone means, and I am not at all sure that he is right. I imagine him to hold that the possession of a great dominion like India, where our power is ultimately based upon our military strength, tends to foster military ideas, to strengthen the power of the services at home, and to give a tone to the public mind unfavourable to economy. But however true this may be, what is there in it to justify you in making the Ryot . . . pay an anna for military expenditure more than is absolutely necessary, I will not say for the maintenance of tranquillity in India, but for the utmost needs of the English Government in this country? . . . The truth of the matter is, I fear, very simple; you have got a Parliament at home, and you do not like either to ask it for more money or to face the outcry which would be raised against large military reductions; therefore you impose a wholly unnecessary burden on the people of India, where there is no parliament to ask awkward questions or to make inconvenient resistance. This may be all very convenient to you at home, may help Childers to get over his difficulties with the Duke of Cambridge, and may make things pleasant in Parliament, but to my mind it is not *just*. The Cabinet, I admit, has got the giant's strength, and *it is using it like a giant.*"<sup>1</sup>

The case was eventually compromised by England paying India £500,000, or rather less than half the cost of the Indian contingent.

In connexion with the dispatch of the contingent a

<sup>1</sup> On September 19, 1884, Ripon writes to Kimberley apropos to the incidence of the cost of the Afghan Boundary Commission: "The question of what expenditure ought to be thrown upon Indian Revenues is the only subject on which Gladstone is quite deaf to the voice of justice."

little incident arose which is worth quoting, as showing how thoroughly the Viceroy identified himself with the interests of his military officers. Soon after the contingent reached Egypt the Commander, Sir Herbert Macpherson, telegraphed privately to Ripon, complaining that the command of his division was to be given to someone else on a question of rank. Whether Sir Garnet Wolseley<sup>1</sup> had ever intended to do this is uncertain, but Ripon's jealousy for the honour of the Indian Army took fire at once, and he sent off a telegram, followed by a strongly worded letter, to Hartington, in which he protested against the proposal as "an unworthy trick and a cruel insult to a most distinguished officer."<sup>2</sup>

It was, indeed, characteristic of Ripon that, except for occasional disagreements with Haines—with whom, nevertheless, he remained on excellent terms—his allusions to the military officers with whom he had dealings are invariably friendly. Sir Donald Stewart was his close ally on the Council. For Roberts he often expresses his admiration, and he wished very much to secure him as Military Member of Council with a view to carrying out the recommendations of the Army Commission. When, however, General T. F. Wilson was appointed to the post, he expressed himself on all occasions highly satisfied with him. Of Sir Edwin Johnson<sup>3</sup> he speaks in high terms as one who, in order to help others out of a difficult position, took on himself the entire blame for the "Missing Millions." It is true that Ripon's relations with his civilian colleagues were also on the whole very good; but his letters are interspersed with pungent comments on their conduct,

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Wolseley and successor to the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces. In 1882 he commanded the British Army in Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Hartington, September 8, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Military Member of Council when Ripon arrived. He was then under a cloud, owing to the error in the military Estimates. (*Infra*, pp. 70-1.)

sometimes indicating undeniable antipathy, which are never found in his references to soldiers.

Though the Afghan settlement led naturally enough to a re-study of our Central Asian policy, there were other circumstances which brought the question more peremptorily to the fore at the outset of Ripon's Viceroyalty. Since the Crimean War a striking change had come over Liberal opinion in regard to Russia. Under the leadership of Gladstone, and mainly, it must be confessed, as a reaction against Disraeli's adoption of the traditional suspicions of Russia, the party had become definitely Russophile. On the other hand, the Russian forward movement in Central Asia continued, but, while this was cited by the Disraelite Tories as a justification of the old antipathy and of such measures as the retention of Kandahar, it gave fresh point to the plea of the Radicals for a definite and friendly understanding with the Tsar.

Ripon was generally in sympathy with this policy, but his motives were not quite the same. He had not altogether shed the Russophobe opinions he expressed with so much fire in 1855, but his conception of the Russian bogey was now less of a superstition and more of a reasoned political calculation. It was, consequently, comprised within far narrower limits. Thus he did not deny the Russian menace to India, but he had convinced himself that it was much less formidable than the Tories imagined it, and, for such as it was, he had very definite remedies. These he set forth in two letters to Hartington in 1882. His first remedy was neither diplomatic nor military.

" I believe that the fear of an invasion of India by the Russians, at all events in our days, is purely chimerical, and I dismiss it at once for all practical purposes ; but there is more plausibility in the notion that as the Russians approach our frontiers more nearly, they may when they are on bad terms with us try to stir up

discontent and trouble by intrigues carried on within our dominions, and the real question, therefore, is how can such intrigues be best met and defeated? The Despatch of December 1880 gives the true answer—by good government and the development of the resources of the country. This is the work to which we ought to set ourselves with every energy which we possess. It is a noble but a difficult work. In some respects the present state of India is very favourable for the accomplishment of the task; there is a tide in the affairs of men here just now which if we seize it at the flood may enable us to do much in a comparatively short space of time; there are signs of progress throughout the country and evident indications of important changes, moral, intellectual, and material, which are passing over the thoughts and lives of the people. Such a position of affairs is no doubt in many respects critical, requiring to be handled with much delicacy; but it is on the whole a hopeful one, if we only have the wisdom and the courage to deal with it aright: a few years of just and righteous government may in such circumstances do a great deal to strengthen our hold on the people, and to increase their confidence in us and their contentment in our rule. But we have a considerable leeway to make up; it is not easy to overstate the mischief which the whole tone of Lytton's Government produced among natives of all classes. . . . The steady pursuit for some years of the policy upon which the present Government of India is endeavouring to act will place us in a better position to encounter Russian intrigues than the fortification of all the frontier towns of Afghanistan and the garrisoning of the whole of them with British troops.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, April 29, 1882.

His second remedy was a Treaty—but without any Russophile illusions.

“ I am quite aware that no treaty will restrain an unscrupulous ruler if he thinks it his interest to break it ; but I must, nevertheless, hold that a treaty is a very different thing from an understanding, and I cannot doubt that if Russia were to sign now such a treaty as I have suggested, she would perfectly comprehend that it was notice to her that no English Government would allow her either to interfere in Afghanistan herself, or to complain of any interference there in which we might think fit to indulge. To go to war for Merv appears to me to be impossible ; to go to war because Russia refuses to demarcate the boundary of Persia appears to me equally, if not more impossible ; but to go to war because Russia, after having bound herself by a regular treaty not to interfere in the internal or external affairs of Afghanistan, had interfered in them, would be not only possible but in the highest degree justifiable.”<sup>1</sup>

The opportunity for acting on the idea of a Treaty speedily presented itself, though not quite in the form that the Russophile Radicals had expected. In 1881 the capture by Russia of Geok Tepe and her annexation of the Akhal Territory were announced. This new manifestation of the “ Russian menace ” led Hartington to make a statement in the House that England would not allow foreign interference in Afghanistan. The statement was all the more remarkable because it went beyond our previous promise to Abdur Rahman to protect him from foreign aggression, inasmuch as it forbade Russian interference in Afghanistan, even with

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, April 15, 1882.

the assent of the Amir.<sup>1</sup> Its effect upon Ripon was to induce him to send home a memorandum on Central Asian policy, in which he formally advocated a definite treaty with Russia, under which we should acquiesce in her advance as far as Merv, while she should undertake not to interfere with Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> His argument, briefly, was that Russia was bound to get to Merv eventually, and that we should make as good a bargain with her as we could while we still had something to offer—namely, our acquiescence. If such a treaty were concluded, we should reap a real advantage, for Russia would no longer be able to interfere in Afghanistan unless she were prepared to raise a definite *casus belli*. We, on our part, should render ourselves responsible for the good conduct of Afghanistan towards Russia, and would thus gain a definite right to interfere in Afghanistan, if necessary. Afghanistan would, in fact, be in the position of a protected state. This policy, Ripon further pointed out, would necessitate our retaining command of the Khojak—by keeping Pishin and Sibi, and, if necessary, continuing the railway to Quetta or beyond—as it would be necessary for us to be in a position either to put pressure on Afghanistan if she behaved badly to Russia, or to defend her if Russia behaved badly to her. Indeed, argued Ripon, unless we had command of the Khojak, Hartington's pronouncement that we would not tolerate interference in Afghanistan was an empty threat.

Ripon's Council, with the exception of Rivers Thompson, concurred in this policy;<sup>3</sup> but the Cabinet at home were mostly against it.<sup>4</sup> The Duke of Argyll, it is true, held that "Russia has a constant and legitimate cause of war with the tribes of Merv, and all promises not to go there are pure *bosh*" ; but he had

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, August 4, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Dated September 2, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from R. Thompson, February 28, 1882 ; Ripon to Hartington, January 14, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> Hartington to Ripon, March 18, 1881 (Enclosure).

left the Cabinet over the Irish Land Bill. Even Northbrook was opposed to the scheme. For some time Hartington wavered. At first he favoured the policy of strengthening Persia by loans and otherwise to enable her to occupy effectively, if not Merv, at least the country as far north as Sarakhs, so as to constitute a buffer between Russia and Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> This would have been a revival of the Disraeli policy, and, in Ripon's opinion, it was doomed to failure owing to the weakness of Persia :

“ My conviction is that if you put Persia into possession of Merv, her occupation of it would afford no protection against a Russian advance, if Russia were ever mad enough to think of striking at us through Afghanistan ; while the presence of Persia at Merv would in ordinary times serve as a convenient screen behind which Russian intrigues in Afghanistan might easily be carried on. In brief, I hold to the old opinion that Persia is not to be trusted either as to ability or as to desire to resist Russia, and that therefore her advance in the direction of Afghanistan is not in accordance with our interests.”<sup>2</sup>

Later Hartington was inclined to abandon the policy of the Persian buffer for that of strengthening Afghanistan, and encouraging her in an attitude of hostility to Russia.<sup>3</sup> He even proposed that a British force might be sent to fortify Herat. This suggestion, which was a return to the most extreme form of the policy which Lytton had adopted, and which Ripon had gone to India to reverse, drew from the latter a protest so torrential that Hartington apologized, and said he had written the letter in a hurry to catch the mail.<sup>4</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Hartington to Ripon, February 24 and March 3, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, February 24, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Hartington to Ripon, April 6 and May 19, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, May 25, 1882.



fact, Ripon, who, in the matter of retaining Pishin and Sibi, had been accused of flirting with the "Forward" policy, was now standing up for the fundamental doctrine of the Liberal school of Indo-Russian diplomacy; namely, that negotiations should be conducted wherever possible, not with Afghanistan, but with Russia.

Eventually Hartington appears to have come round to Ripon's view, for in October 1882 he wrote to Granville in favour of a definite treaty with Russia.<sup>1</sup> Granville and the Cabinet,<sup>2</sup> however, remained unconvinced, and it was not until Russia had actually advanced to the confines of Afghanistan that steps were taken to arrive at an agreement.

At the beginning of 1884 Russia established herself at Merv, and it became urgently necessary to agree to a delimitation of the Russo-Afghan boundary. A joint Commission, with Sir Peter Lumsden as chief British Commissioner, was appointed, and when Ripon's term of office ended the British Commissioners were on the spot, awaiting the arrival of their dilatory Russian colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

Ripon fully recognized that he was leaving a difficult task for his successor, but he had the consolation of knowing that he had foreseen it and that the responsibility was not his. He writes to Kimberley: "If you had entered into direct communication with Russia in 1880,<sup>4</sup> you would have discounted the effect of her absorption of Merv, and have avoided the serious difficulties in which you are now placed."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, he saw that, in the event of an Anglo-Russian agreement, which was now inevitable, the dubious factor was the willingness or ability of the

<sup>1</sup> Holland: *Life of Devonshire*, vol. i, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Including Kimberley, who succeeded Hartington at the India Office in December 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Fitzmaurice: *Life of Granville*, vol. ii, p. 421.

<sup>4</sup> He must mean 1881, as it was in that year, not in 1880, that he had advocated an Anglo-Russian agreement.

<sup>5</sup> March 16, 1884.

Amir to ensure the good behaviour of the populace on the Afghan side of the Russo-Afghan frontier, and this led him to a strangely pessimistic conclusion :

“As you truly say, the prospect is formidable, especially in regard to the responsibility which will fall upon us for the good behaviour of the tribes of the Afghan frontier. This responsibility is very serious. It appears to me to be more serious the more I consider the subject ; but as I said in a Memorandum which I wrote on the 2nd Sept. 1881 and sent to Hartington at the time : ‘Our responsibility flows directly from Lord Hartington’s declaration made in the House of Commons, 1 Aug. 1881. The moment one great nation says to another “I will not permit you to interfere with this small state on my border,” it becomes responsible to the other nation for restraining the smaller state from injuring its neighbour, and may justly be called upon to exercise that restraint or to allow the other nation to redress its own wrongs.’ All the experience which I have had since those lines were written convinces me that the difficulty of effectually exercising that restraint over the Amir of Afghanistan will be so great, and the complications in which the attempt will involve us so grave, that if the matter were *res integra*, and if it were not for such declarations as those of August 1881, engaging us so solemnly before the world, I should be very much inclined to advocate the policy of leaving the Afghans to take care of themselves, of contenting ourselves with providing fully for the defence of our own frontiers, and of relying upon our own resources within those frontiers, and upon the steady development of measures of internal government calculated to promote the contentment and attachment of our own

subjects and allies, and especially of the educated and influential classes throughout India. . . . I am afraid that you will think these very pusillanimous ideas, but I have nothing about me in regard to questions of foreign or colonial policy of the neo-radical spirit of which you spoke in your letter of the 15th Feb.,<sup>1</sup> and I look upon any increase of our responsibilities with dislike and alarm. However, it is no use now discussing such a policy as I have described above. We are committed before the world to another line.”<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, and as the events proved, he was unduly pessimistic. He underrated the wisdom of the Amir, who saw clearly that his safety lay in never giving either England or Russia the slightest excuse for entering Afghanistan, and who consistently pursued this policy throughout his reign.<sup>3</sup> The Penjdeh incident seemed likely for a moment to disturb the peace, but the good sense of the Amir and the diplomacy of Dufferin surmounted the danger, and in 1887 the protocol for the delimitation of the frontier was signed.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the Russo-Afghan question was for the time settled on precisely the lines advocated by Ripon—a clear understanding with Russia that Afghanistan was under British protection, and that there should be no interference with her so long as she behaved herself with regard to Russia. The final solution, however, did not come—and, indeed, could not come—until it was made part and parcel of a comprehensive *entente* with Russia in 1907.

<sup>1</sup> Kimberley had expressed an opinion that a “Jingo” spirit was growing up among the new Radicals.

<sup>2</sup> To Kimberley, March 29, 1884.

<sup>3</sup> Lyall: *Life of Dufferin*, vol. ii, pp. 93 et seqq.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ECONOMIC POLICY

(1881-1884)

TOWARDS the end of 1880 Ripon had a serious illness. On his recovery, he wrote characteristically to Hartington: "I hate jobs, and have no wish to do one; but do you think it would be a crime of that kind to give my surgeon, Major John Anderson, a C.S.I. for saving the life of a Viceroy?" The "job" was duly perpetrated.<sup>1</sup>

This illness marks the close of the first period of Ripon's administration—a period occupied, to the exclusion of almost every other subject, with Afghan affairs. On his recovery he set to work on the extensive programme of internal reforms with which his name is associated. The principal questions dealt with in his Viceroyalty may be summarized as follows:

#### (a) ECONOMIC

Fiscal reforms.

Land reforms (including all measures based on the Famine Commission's Report).<sup>2</sup>

Railway policy.

#### (b) POLITICAL

Repeal of the Vernacular Press Acts.

Local self-government.

Questions affecting the admission of natives into the

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Hartington, January 12 and May 25, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> The Report of the Commission appointed after the famine of 1876-7 was published in 1880.

Civil Service and their status therein. Of these, the Ilbert Bill was by far the most important.

The spirit in which he embarked on this ambitious programme was far from sanguine—so far, indeed, that for a moment he even contemplated retiring from the Viceroyalty altogether. His fears were confided to his old friends and confidants, Forster and Aberdare :

*To W. E. Forster*

SIMLA, May 26, 1881.

MY DEAR FORSTER,— . . . Now that I have, thank God, got clear of the War, I have more time to turn my attention to internal matters, and am hard at work at Famine prevention, primary education, the extension of the elective system in municipalities, the relaxation of the existing regulations on the subject of the possession and carrying of arms, etc., besides large measures of Army reform and organization ; and there are in addition, questions connected with the relations between landlord and tenant very similar to, and scarcely less difficult than, those with which you have to deal in Ireland, which are pressing for early and careful consideration. You will see, therefore, that I have plenty of work to do of a very varied and interesting character. I am occupied all day and every day, and have never been so hard-worked at any time of my life ; but I am, I am thankful to say, very well, and do not at present feel any evil effects from the strain. I have quite shaken off my illness (of which, by the bye, I very nearly died), and I do not think it has left any bad result behind it.

Of course the chance of succeeding in any of the objects at which I am now working depends upon the amount of support which I receive from Hartington,

and after a year's experience I do not feel that I know what I may expect from that quarter. Hartington is, I imagine, greatly overworked with Parliamentary and general business, and I suspect that a good many things are practically settled by the India Office Officials, in whom my confidence is not unlimited. You know how cold Hartington is, and can therefore fancy how little encouragement his letters are likely to contain. I am sometimes rather disheartened at this, and I somewhat doubt if I should have been induced to come out here if I had known the exact footing on which I was to stand. Very likely I am unreasonable in feeling thus even occasionally, but I am sure you will make allowance for the discontent of an exile who sometimes feels the want of a little cordial support from those former colleagues who sent him out here. I ought, however, to except Gladstone, from whom I had last year a letter of warm commendation, which I shall always value most highly, and Northbrook, who has been kindness itself ever since I left home. Perhaps if you ever have time to write to me, you might tell me what you think are Hartington's *real* feelings towards me, but I do not wish you to say anything to him of these unbosomings, which I should only indulge in with one of my oldest and dearest friends like yourself. As I have said, I am much interested in my work, and am not unhopeful that with God's help I may do some little good here ; but I need not say that if the Govt. have not entire confidence in me . . . the smallest hint would suffice to take me back to England. . . .

I get more Radical every day ; and am rejoiced to say that the effect of despotic power has so far been to strengthen and deepen my Liberal convictions.

Ever your affectionate, RIPON.

*To Lord Aberdare*

SIMLA, May 24, 1881.

MY DEAR ABERDARE,— . . . There has been a marked change in the relations between the India Office and the Govt. of India since I knew the former in days gone by. In those times it was considered a great mistake to attempt to govern India from London. It was held the business of the Secretary of State to lay down the general principles upon which India was to be administered, and then so long as those principles were observed to leave a large freedom to the Governor-General and to accord to him a cordial support. Nowadays, owing to a variety of causes, and among them to the telegraph and the increased facilities of communication of all kinds with England, a different system to a great extent prevails, and the interference of the India Office has largely increased. The result of a year's experience does not lead me to think that the change is advantageous. No doubt I am not an impartial witness ; but at least I may say this for myself, that the opinion which I now entertain on this point is exactly the same as that which I used to hold in the old House of Commons days when you and I used so often to discuss Indian questions <sup>1</sup> together. The evils of the new system are aggravated just now by the fact that Hartington is immensely overworked with other than Indian matters, and that the subordinates of the India Office have therefore, I suspect, a good deal of their own way. I am not sure that, if I had known exactly how matters stood, I should have come out here, but being here I must make the best of my position, and I am the more ready to do so because I am greatly interested in my

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, vol. i, pp. 63 et seq., and Cap VI.

work, and hope that, now that I have got rid of the horrible inheritance of the Afghan war, I may be able to do some little good in the internal administration of the country. . . .

I must bring this letter to a close with an earnest entreaty that you will, from time to time, send me one of your charming letters, and will

Believe me, ever yours affectionately, RIPON.

These fears were not altogether unjustified, as Hartington subsequently avowed, but they were speedily forgotten as Ripon warmed to his reforming task.

In the economic domain he had no need to break fresh ground. His financial measures, indeed, involved no such reversal of Lytton's policy as the evacuation of Kandahar or the repeal of the Vernacular Press Acts. He accepted the programme already laid down in the financial reforms inaugurated by Sir John Strachey,<sup>1</sup> and in the wide-reaching proposals of the Famine Commission. Sir John Strachey had been Financial Member of Council under Lytton, and the two had been closely associated, but even the opponents of the Lytton régime admitted the success of Strachey's policy, despite the disaster of the "Missing Millions" with which his administration closed.<sup>2</sup> That policy aimed

<sup>1</sup> Younger brother and colleague of Sir R. Strachey. He entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1842. He became Chief Commissioner of Oude in 1866 and Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces in 1874. In 1876 he entered the Governor-General's Council as Finance Minister. From 1885 to 1895 he was a member of the Secretary of State's Council. He died in 1907.

<sup>2</sup> The story of this blunder is briefly as follows: In March 1880 an estimate of the cost of the War then in progress was put forward, which left out of account items of expenditure amounting to about five millions (*Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 498). The explanation was that under the system then in force disbursements were only taken into account after they had been audited, and, owing to the stress of work during the war, the audit had fallen a long way behind. The Finance Department, by accepting the faulty estimate from the Military Accounts Department, had made itself responsible, and though the military member (Sir E.



at the gradual abolition of what were held to be protective import duties,<sup>1</sup> the equalization and reduction of the Salt Tax, the devolution of financial powers from the Central to the Provincial Governments, and the institution of the "Famine Insurance Fund," by which Rs. 15,000,000 of annual revenue was devoted—so far as it was not needed for direct famine relief—to "protective" railway and irrigation works, and to reduction of debt, with a view to strengthening the resources of India against the periodic visits of famine.<sup>2</sup>

Financial stringency, the result of war and famine, had interrupted Strachey's reforms, and they were not resumed in the first Budget of Ripon's Viceroyalty, because in the spring of 1881 India was not yet completely clear of the Afghan imbroglio. During the autumn of 1881, however, the subject of future financial policy was under discussion, and the Budget of 1882-3 marked the greatest step hitherto taken in the direction of the reforms above mentioned.

Meanwhile, Major Evelyn Baring<sup>3</sup> had succeeded Strachey. The blunder of the "Missing Millions" had discredited Strachey, who had offered to resign at once, but had stayed on till the arrival of Baring in December 1880. Baring, who was Northbrook's cousin, had been his private secretary during his Viceroyalty, and Ripon

Johnson) took upon himself more of the blame than he probably deserved (Letter to Hartington, October 4, 1880), Ripon was of the opinion that the responsibility of Strachey and Lytton was more than a technical one, since, but for their readiness to "accept pleasant statements without enquiry," they would have realized that the proffered estimates were impossibly low (to Hartington, June 14, 1880). The above-mentioned letter to Hartington of October 4, 1880, is very damaging to Lytton and Strachey. They appear to have begged Johnson to take the blame. The letter is not referred to by Holland in his *Life of Hartington*.

<sup>1</sup> Especially those on cotton, of which the greater part were abolished in 1878 and 1879, in pursuance of a House of Commons resolution calling on India to abolish these duties when her financial position should permit.

<sup>2</sup> Balfour: *Lytton's Indian Administration*, Cap. X.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Earl of Cromer, the famous proconsul who rescued Egypt from misrule and bankruptcy and consolidated British domination in the country.

welcomed his appointment to the post, both on this account and on account of his connexion with Northbrook. They held in principle the same views on the important matters in hand—notably the abolition of customs duties, the substitution of direct for indirect taxation, and the encouragement of private enterprise for the construction of railways. But Baring's eagerness to force these good things on a reluctant India led to difficulties with Ripon, who prided himself on not being a doctrinaire.

Baring's first scheme of the 1882-3 Budget included proposals for the abolition of all the import duties—cotton and other—which Strachey had left, except the "special duties" on liquors, etc., the reduction of the salt duty, the only tax to which the poorest part of the population contributes, and the remission of certain local imposts in the N.W. Province. To recoup his revenue, he proposed to convert the existing "License Tax" into an income tax. It was the latter proposal which precipitated Ripon's opposition, and he fought it with all his customary vigour. This license tax on trades had been imposed in 1878, in order that the trading classes should contribute their share to the famine expenditure. Although inequitable and irregular in its incidence, it was not oppressive. But Baring proposed to augment it by placing a proportional income tax on *all* incomes over Rs. 2,000 per annum, including professional and official incomes and those of landowners in the Central Provinces and Bengal, who were particularly lightly assessed for land revenue, but not other landowners.

Ripon saw clearly that Baring's proposed Budget was too heavily loaded with measures which were bound to offend Indian opinion—the income-tax proposal being particularly dangerous. He was, moreover, of opinion that Baring's proposals had not been brought forward in time to admit of their adequate discussion, and would have liked to postpone the unpopular parts of

the Budget till the following year. Hartington, however, was inclined to back up Baring, and to "make the plunge" at once, though doubtful whether an income tax could justly be exacted from income derived from land which had come under the Permanent Settlement.

The conflict threatened to become a crisis, for Ripon felt that the public interest, and perhaps also his personal dignity, were at stake. He wrote strongly to his friends in the Government at home :

*To the Earl of Northbrook*

Sept. 23, 1881.

. . . I am convinced that the political effect would be deplorable if we were to give up all the cotton duties, to re-establish the Income Tax, and to be prevented by the Govt. at home from carrying out reductions of expenditure which were unanimously recommended.<sup>1</sup>

. . . There is another reason for delay which weighs with me a great deal. We are going to repeal the Vernacular Press Act when we get to Calcutta. If at the very moment when we do so we bring forward a very unpopular Budget which the English Press are sure to attack vehemently and to accuse of being "dictated mainly in English interests," what will the native Press do? They will repeat and exaggerate the charges of the English Press, and then the adversaries of the Liberty of the Press will cry out: "This is exactly what we told you: you have unmuzzled the Vernacular Press, and see what is the result." Is there anything in our financial position which makes it necessary to risk an injury of this kind to so great a political object as the freedom of the Press?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ripon is referring here to the proposed reductions of Army expenditure.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Northbrook, October 1, 1881.

He put another aspect of the same point to Hartington :

“ . . . It must be remembered that it is the people who would be specially hit by Baring's taxation—the Bengal Zemindars, the native Bankers, merchants, etc., who influence chiefly the Press on the one hand and the native Chiefs on the other.”<sup>1</sup>

Thoughts of resignation now recurred to Ripon, and he wrote frankly on the difficulties of his personal position to Northbrook :

*To the Earl of Northbrook*

Oct. 15, 1881.

If Baring and I ultimately differ, I do not at all know what line Hartington is likely to take. Baring's proposals will, I have no doubt, receive Mallet's<sup>2</sup> support, and Mallet has great influence with Hartington upon questions of this kind. . . . You will appreciate how difficult my position would be if I were to be overruled in such a matter. . . . At present I do not see how I should extricate myself from so false a position, although, of course, I am well aware that there are occasions in public life in which it is one's duty to support measures of which one may have great doubts as to the wisdom. If you find that the case which I am contemplating is likely to arise, please give me your advice as to what I ought, in your opinion, to do. It would cost me very little to go home ; my wife is not well, and I do not know how far it is the climate which is affecting her injuriously. I have been feeling the pressure of work somewhat of late, and if the Government at home does

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hartington, October 22, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Louis Mallet, P.C. (1823-90), was Under-Secretary of State for India. He was a distinguished economist and had previously been in the Board of Trade. He was afterwards a member of the Council of India. His life has been written by his son, Bernard Mallet.

not want me out here any more, I should be far from sorry to return to my *lares* and *penates*; but at the same time, if it is thought I am any use here I do not want to run away from my work. There are one or two directions in which I think that I might perhaps do some good, and, if so, I feel that I ought not lightly to abandon the task, but of course my power of usefulness depends entirely upon the support and confidence which I receive from the Secretary of State and the Government. . . .

Nov. 14, 1881.

. . . On most points we [Baring and I] agree in principle. It may perhaps be said that the great distinction between us is that he is a Doctrinaire and I am not. I think a Doctrinaire policy dangerous in India, and that in the circumstances of this country the Government ought to apply principles which are sound in themselves with a careful regard to the feelings and even the prejudices of those over whom they rule. . . . He came out here with a cut-and-dried policy arranged between him and Mallet at the India Office without consideration of circumstances or of persons in this country. . . . Mallet is a more utter doctrinaire than Baring and believes more than he does in the unredeemed wickedness of the Indian Civil Service. . . . I suspect that Baring and Mallet thought that I was a much more colourless person, without opinions or a policy of my own, than I really am. They forgot, I imagine, that I have thought much about Indian questions all my life. . . .

The result of these letters—or rather, of the letter of October 15—was an energetic intervention by Northbrook which speedily brought about an amicable settle-

ment. Northbrook telegraphed a remonstrance to his gifted cousin, and wrote soothingly to the aggrieved Viceroy :

“ I hope and trust from my telegram that you have settled the Budget comfortably with Evelyn Baring, and that what I have written may have been of some little use in bringing two of my best friends together. I can quite understand your having thought that Evelyn Baring wanted to force your hand about the Budget, but I feel convinced from what he wrote to me that he had no such idea. . . . You seem so fully to appreciate Evelyn's ability and good work that I cannot doubt that you will overlook his being a little impatient and anxious to get on. . . . My experience is, that real ability and good work is very rare and that it is a grand thing to find. You are a first-rate hand at managing people, and I shall be surprised indeed if you don't find out very soon the best way of utilizing Evelyn's excellent qualities. . . . I think you may be satisfied that, on any matter of importance, Hartington makes up his mind for himself ; in fact, I know of no one in Politics who has so clear and independent a judgment. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Eventually a compromise was negotiated. The income tax was dropped, and the license tax left as it was, for the time. Later, when the falling exchange necessitated higher taxes, an income tax was imposed which, however, exempted *all* incomes derived from land (1886-7). For the same reason the customs duty had eventually to be reimposed and the salt duties raised.<sup>2</sup> Ripon's own time, however, was one of pros-

<sup>1</sup> Northbrook to Ripon, December 8, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Decennial Moral and Material Progress of India Report, 1881-91, pp. 197-8

perity, and during it taxation remained at the low level to which the reforms of 1882-3 reduced it.

Otherwise the Budget proposals of Baring were retained, the abandonment of the income tax being compensated for by a more liberal estimate for opium. It should be noted that Ripon's attitude towards opium was not in accordance with that of modern Radicalism, as was also his attitude towards Free Trade. He defines both with utter frankness in his speech on the 1882-3 Budget, which is worth quoting as an illuminating epilogue to his quarrel with Baring :

“ It was therefore, as it seems to me, absolutely imperative that the Government should take the earliest opportunity of dealing with this question of the customs duties, and I must say for myself that it was a strong motive with me to seize that opportunity as soon as it arrived ; because, by dealing with this subject in a permanent and final manner, we may cherish the hope that we shall thus put an end to those differences of opinion upon the questions which have unhappily now for several years existed between the people of England and the people of India, and in which I must frankly say that I think neither party to the controversy has been just to the other.

I think that in India men have been apt to overlook the feelings which must naturally be entertained upon this subject by those who have all their lives been the earnest and conscientious advocates of the principles of Free Trade. No doubt it is perfectly true that when Manchester manufacturers ask for the repeal of the cotton duties, they are asking for something which will confer benefit upon themselves ; but I venture to say that it is almost impossible for those who stood beside my friends, the late Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, in the

great free-trade controversies of the past, to understand how men can possibly accuse them of selfishness, because they desire to confer upon the people of India those benefits from which they and the people of England had derived so many blessings. And, again, I think that in England men have not understood that strong—I had almost said that vehement—dread which exists in this country in connection with the imposition of direct taxation. Neither, I think, have they adverted to the fact of the limited extent to which economic principles are either studied or understood here, and, therefore, this controversy might have continued, and might have been made the subject of more and more misunderstanding between two great branches of the subjects of our Queen-Empress, who ought to feel that they form but one people under the shadow of her august throne. . . .

. . . My view on the subject of opium is a very simple one. I do not deny that there are objections of various kinds to the opium revenue. I do not deny that it is not a satisfactory branch of our revenue in many ways ; but I say distinctly that I will be no party to abandoning that revenue unless I can clearly see my way to replace it by some other form of taxation which would be neither oppressive to the people nor strongly repugnant to public opinion. Well, I can see nothing of the kind. I have considered the question very carefully. I have considered it with the utmost respect for the opinion of those excellent men who take a different view of this subject from that which I take, and who are moving at home in the matter ; and I have been totally unable to discover the taxation by which our opium revenue could be replaced, and by which, without oppression, without incurring a great and, I may say, a just un-



popularity, we should have the slightest chance of recouping ourselves if we were to abandon that revenue in whole or in part. As I said before, it is, in my judgment, the first duty of the Government of India to consider the interests of the people of India ; and it is from that point of view that I look at this question ; and looking at it from that point of view, I can have no doubt that the course which the Government of India have determined to take—namely, that of maintaining our position with respect to the opium revenue—is a just and right one.”<sup>1</sup>

Northbrook's hope that his “two best friends” would come to understand each other was fully realized. They became the closest friends and allies, and when in the spring of 1883 Baring was appointed to Cairo to undertake the making of the new Egypt, Ripon was genuinely distressed. He wrote to Northbrook :

“To me . . . the loss of Baring just now will be serious. We have got to understand each other thoroughly ; I feel entire confidence in him, and I know that I can rely upon him absolutely in the hour of difficulty. We have, as you know, had our differences and have fought them out ; so far as I am concerned, at all events, the result has been to raise my opinion of Baring and to increase my regard for him. To be deprived of such a colleague just now is by no means pleasant.”<sup>2</sup>

A month later<sup>3</sup> he wrote to Kimberley : “I dislike the prospect of losing Baring more and more every day.”

Another question which brought Ripon into sharp

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of Ripon in India*, vol. i, pp. 245-6, 256-7 (March 10, 1882).

<sup>2</sup> April 28, 1883. “Just now” was a reference to the Ilbert Bill controversy. (*Infra*, Cap. XX.)

<sup>3</sup> May 31, 1883.

collision with the Home Authorities was that of railways. His interest in railways was concerned chiefly with their efficacy in preventing famine. The supreme object of his policy on its economic side was, indeed, the defence of the country against famine, and perhaps the most important recommendation of the Famine Commission had been the construction of protective railways. The Commission had estimated that at least 5,000 miles of protective railways were still required in India, and that two-thirds of this length could not be expected to yield a commercial return on the cost of construction. The amount available from the Famine Insurance Fund for the construction of these lines would only suffice for their completion in thirty years, and, in order to obtain funds for quicker construction, Ripon wished to employ that amount (£500,000) in guaranteeing interest to private firms who should undertake to construct them.

A Committee of the House of Commons had recommended, and the Home Government had consequently ordained, a limit of £2,500,000 on the amount India might borrow annually for railway construction, and the financial purists at the India Office thought that Ripon's proposal was an attempt to get behind this restriction, as it amounted virtually to borrowing the amount required for the lines concerned and paying the interest from the Famine Insurance Fund.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, they were strongly opposed to the construction of commercially unremunerative lines by private companies under Government guarantee. Ripon made several attempts to win over Hartington to his policy. How strongly he felt is shown by the following extract from one of his letters :

“ I wish I could convey to you my notion of the deep sense of responsibility which weighs upon me in regard to this question of famine prevention. It seems to me

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Sir L. Mallet, August 26, 1881.

almost a test question for the English Government in India—a test of whether it is or is not beneficial to the people of the country. If with all our power and with all our knowledge and all our science we cannot preserve them from dying of starvation by hundreds of thousands every few years, how can we justify our domination over them? . . . Is it a satisfactory answer to say that we are making our protective railways at the rate of £500,000 a year, and that, after some three or four more famines have passed by, we hope to have given our people reasonable security against their future recurrence?”<sup>1</sup>

It was of no use. This time the pedants and doctrinaires prevailed and the scheme was rejected.

When Kimberley succeeded Hartington as Secretary of State, Ripon returned to the attack, and the Government of India submitted a somewhat different plan for obtaining the money they needed. Of this plan, the Viceroy wrote to the new Secretary of State :

“I daresay that I seem utterly unprincipled to those who look at the matter either from a purely railway or a purely economical point of view, and so no doubt in their sense I am. I want these lines made ; I believe it to be one of the very foremost duties of the Govt. to get them made ; and I am ready to accept any practical scheme which will effect that object. In July 1881 we proposed a plan for this purpose to Hartington, which appeared to us to be in entire accordance with the principles laid down in a despatch of his [advocating the employment of private enterprise]. This plan was rejected, and we have offered another in its stead.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, November 12, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> To Kimberley, January 20, 1883.

At first Kimberley seemed inclined to meet Ripon's wishes ; but a severe attack in the House of Commons by Edward Stanhope on the alleged extravagance of the Government of India—to which Baring wrote a crushing reply later—made it politically inexpedient to sanction any additional expenditure for the time.<sup>1</sup> Kimberley had the question referred to a Select Committee, whose report, though deprecating Ripon's plan of hypothecating the Famine Fund for interest, did recommend an increased rate of expenditure on the " protective " lines.

As regards railway policy generally, Ripon's viceroyalty was notable for the revival of the policy, which had been in abeyance since 1863, of encouraging the construction of commercially profitable lines by private enterprise. For this Baring was responsible, but it was Ripon who enabled him to overcome the considerable opposition which the idea met with at first in the Viceroy's Council.<sup>2</sup>

It was, however, in regard to land questions that Ripon's economic policy touched most nearly the masses of India. In one of his letters to his wife, while on his journey to India,<sup>3</sup> he expressed a hope that, when the war was over, he would be able to turn his attention to the land questions, in which direction he foresaw he could do most good for the people. In those days Indian industrial development was in its infancy, and the importance of fostering its development, in order to make India less dependent on the variable fortunes of agriculture, was less fully realized. The well-being of India meant exclusively the well-being of the peasant. Accordingly, in writing to Gladstone an account of his first year's administration, Ripon speaks of the land question as the greatest of all problems, and in writing to Mallet (August 4, 1882) he refers to the question of land revenue assessment as " of far more

<sup>1</sup> From Kimberley, July 20, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. letter to Hartington, November 3, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> May 30, 1880.

vital importance to the primary interests of the great mass of the people than the question of local self-government."

As with all the great questions with which Ripon's name is identified, the land question was inevitably forced on him irrespective of his own desires. The Famine Commission, which had been appointed after the great famine of 1876, presented its famous report shortly after his arrival. In this report the Commissioners dealt exhaustively with every ascertainable cause to which these periodic disasters might be traced, and their proposals not only cover the entire field of Indian land policy but go to the roots of the whole system of Indian administration. Not only throughout Ripon's reign, but long after, the Government of India was busy with reforms based on the report of the Famine Commissioners. As a preliminary step it was necessary to reconstitute the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, which had been abolished in the period of financial stringency preceding Ripon's arrival. To this department, and to the corresponding departments which were formed in the provinces, were entrusted all questions of an agrarian nature, including famine, the improvement of agriculture, the assessment and collection of land revenue, and the relations of landlord and tenant. The creation of a new system of revenue assessment, based on a survey kept always up-to-date, and not to be enhanced save for stated reasons, the publication of a Famine Code laying down the procedure to be adopted in case of scarcity, the construction of protective railway and irrigation works, and the improvement of agricultural methods were among the chief matters with which Ripon had to deal. But these, with the exception of the railways (which have already been dealt with), were not violently controversial. It was the question of landlord and tenant—especially in Bengal and Oude—which not only taxed the business capacity and enormous industry of the

Viceroy but called forth all his high qualities as a statesman.

In Bengal the agrarian problem was of long standing. Here the English had found the land in the possession of revenue farmers who had virtually assumed the position of landlords, but the cultivators still possessed rights of occupancy, while the landlords were not absolute owners of the soil. The famous Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis had fixed once for all the amount of revenue to be paid by the landlords to the State, but had neglected to deal with the question of the rights of the tenants as against the landlords. The main object of the Bengal Rent Bill was to restore the latter rights :

“ Indeterminate though these rights were, they at least included the right of occupancy conditional upon the payment of the established rate of rent and the privilege of having that rate fixed by public authority. Under the Mogul Govt. the land tax was collected by farmers or contractors or rajas, sometimes mere nominees of the rulers of the day, sometimes possessing pre-existent rights of various kinds. The British Government converted this intermediate class into the Zamindars of the Permanent Settlement, and changed the land tax of the Moguls into the rents of the Zamindari estates. But the Zamindars, though termed actual proprietors of the land, were not absolute proprietors as against the Ryots. The latter possessed substantial rights which, at the time of the Permanent Settlement, though not then ascertained and defined, were saved in express terms, and the Government of 1793 reserved to itself the power . . . to ascertain and settle those rights at any future time when it might deem it expedient to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dispatch of the Government of India, March 21, 1882.

In 1859 an attempt had been made to fulfil the above intention, but had not succeeded. It had been enacted that a Ryot who had occupied land for twelve years consecutively should acquire occupancy rights in the same. But it was easy for the zamindar to make it impossible for his tenant to prove twelve years' occupancy, or to shift him to a different holding before the twelve years were completed, and the Bengal tenantry had thus gradually become tenants at will, subject to a rack rent. The condition of things was thoroughly unsatisfactory, and serious agrarian riots occurred in 1873 ; but, though legislation had often been attempted, various causes had prevented anything of importance being done. In 1879 a Commission had been appointed to consider the subject, and in July 1881 Ripon was in possession of the Commission's report, together with the recommendations of the Bengal Government thereon.

The principles of the proposed law were :

- (1) To give the settled Ryot the same security in his holding as he enjoyed under the old customary law ;
- (2) To ensure to the landlord a fair share of the increased value of the produce of the soil ; and
- (3) To lay down rules by which all disputed questions between landlord and tenant could be reduced to simple issues and decided upon equitable principles.

The recommendations of the Commission, besides various proposals for fixing an equitable rent, limiting the power of distraint, etc., proposed that Ryots who had resided three years in a village should have occupancy of all land occupied for three years. To this the main objection was that it would still be open to the zamindar to shift his tenants every two or three years to prevent their securing such rights ; and, accordingly, the Government of India substituted a

proposal which emanated from Ripon himself.<sup>1</sup> This was, briefly, to attach occupancy rights, not to the person of the tenant, but to the land.

Land has from time immemorial been divided into *Ryotti* land, or land occupied by Ryots having originally rights of occupancy, and land called *Khamar*, *Zerat*, etc., being land kept by the owner in his own hands, and let out to cultivators on short terms. The tendency has been now for a long time to increase the amount of *Khamar*, etc., land, and thus to diminish the amount of *Ryotti* land. . . . We think that this . . . should be checked for the future, and that all tenants of *Ryotti* land should be held to be occupancy tenants, the holders of *Khamar*, etc., remaining tenants at will.<sup>2</sup>

Ripon goes on to say : " I must not conceal from you that any measure such as we have proposed will be very distasteful to the Zamindars," but, he says, it will give the tenants no more than the rights to which they were entitled at the time of the Permanent Settlement, and pleads for an early decision, as the question is more than ripe for settlement.

Ripon had hoped that the proposed scheme would meet with the acceptance of the Secretary of State's Council, as it had the support of Sir Ashley Eden, who was just retiring from the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal to become a member of Council. Eden, however, failed him, and he did not scruple to express his annoyance. " I suspect that his change of front is due to his having been keeping very bad political company lately." <sup>3</sup>

While accepting the other parts of the scheme, the

<sup>1</sup> See letter from Rivers Thompson, February 11, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, March 24, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, October 30, 1882.



Secretary of State suggested that occupancy rights, instead of being attached to any particular kind of land, should accrue to tenants who had occupied any land in an estate or village for twelve years. This, Ripon pointed out, would have the effect that zamindars, instead of merely moving their tenants from one plot of land to another to prevent their securing occupancy rights, would keep them in a state of circulation from estate to estate and from village to village. It is true that the measure, being retrospective, would have the immediate effect of conferring occupancy rights on a majority of the tenants ; but landlords in other parts of India where tenancy legislation was contemplated would at once take precautions against a similar provision being applied in their case, and would start a game of General Post among their tenants. Moreover, the India Office scheme would involve endless litigation in proving occupancy, whereas the Government of India's proposal was based on a distinction which, in most cases, would admit of easy proof, and which, when once settled, would be settled finally.

The India Office would not be persuaded. The Secretary of State offered to allow a Bill to be introduced containing Ripon's proposal, but on the implied understanding that sanction to that proposal might eventually be withheld. Ripon naturally refused thus to put himself into a false position, and the Bill was introduced in March 1883 on the lines of the India Office proposal.

The subsequent history of the Bill is one of stubborn fighting between the Government of India and the Bengali landowners. It was found necessary to make many concessions to the latter, but Ripon adhered steadfastly to the main principles of the Bill. In so doing he was risking unpopularity among the most influential class of natives, and the section whom he championed was the least articulate part of the population. To Tom Hughes he writes :

“ The Bill does not go quite as far as I could wish, as I could not screw Hartington up to the point of accepting a really complete measure, but he sanctioned just before he left the India Office a long step in the right direction, and with this we must be content. We shall, of course, meet with strong opposition from the land-owning interest, and as the Zamindars and others have the command of powerful associations and the special organs in the Press, while the Ryots can scarcely make their voices heard at all, you must expect to have your ears assailed with outcries, and to be told that I have lost all my popularity and am regarded with aversion. Popularity is worth nothing (although I do not pretend to dislike it) unless it can be used as an engine to enable the Government to do good works ; and if it is to be diminished, or to be lost in fighting the battles of the poor cultivators of the soil, it is not worth retaining for an hour.”<sup>1</sup>

There was a serious danger that the Bengal Tenancy Bill might drive a wedge into the party of the educated Indians just at the time when the race-conflict aroused by the Ilbert Bill was at its height. On December 5, 1883, Ripon writes to A. O. Hume of a reported “ unholy alliance ” between the Anglo-Indian Defence Association and the Zamindar party. Although this was not accomplished, Ripon became the object of much resentment on the part of the Zamindars. Sir A. Colvin reported to him : “ As to natives, the Zamindari section here . . . are very disinclined to show any good-will towards you. The younger Bengal section, on the other hand, are enthusiastic, and the two are at present casting about for a *modus vivendi*.”<sup>2</sup> Eventually a reconciliation seems to have taken place,

<sup>1</sup> January 9, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> November 26, 1884.

and the British India Association—the body specially representing Zamindars—presented Ripon with an address of thanks on his departure. “I imagine,” says Ripon to Kimberley, “that they found public opinion too strong for them.”

Shortly before he left India, Ripon was able to submit to the India Office proposals for the settlement of the tenancy question in Oude. In his farewell letter to Sir Stuart Bayley he says: “My last petition to you is to look after the interests of the Oude tenants and to get Lord Dufferin to stand up for them against the India Office.” Both the Bengal and the Oude questions were eventually disposed of by Dufferin, whose Irish experiences made him peculiarly fit to deal with questions of landlord and tenant. Lyall’s *Life of Dufferin* shows that he fulfilled Ripon’s wish, and successfully “stood up for the Oude tenants against the India Office.”<sup>1</sup>

As regards other provinces, it may be mentioned that a Tenancy Act for the Central Provinces was passed in Ripon’s time, and one for the Punjab was under consideration when he retired, and was passed by Dufferin’s Government in 1887.

This strenuous chapter of Ripon’s work in India may be fitly closed with an extract from the letter Hartington wrote to him when he relinquished the Secretaryship of State, not only because it contains a well-merited tribute to Ripon’s economic labours, but because it explains many of the difficulties of which the Viceroy had to complain:

*From the Marquess of Hartington*

*Dec. 11, 1882.*

. . . I will not say that I altogether regret the change, for, as I have already told you, I have long felt that the business of the India Office was more than I could contend with, and I much doubt whether, when very

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii, pp. 80-2.

large questions have to be dealt with, such as some of those which are now under consideration, it is not more than any man, with much House of Commons work and much to do in the Cabinet with subjects of general policy, can attempt to manage ; and I have long felt that many of the subjects at which you have worked so hard and in which you have taken so much interest have been neglected and postponed in a way which was not fair to you, your colleagues, or India. . . . Obstructive as you may have considered us sometimes at the India Office, there is only one opinion there as to the great zeal and ability of the present Government of India, and as to the excellent effect which has been produced in India by your administration. Only the other day Sir F. Halliday, who is one of the strongest opponents of your Bengal land policy, said, in speaking to me of the strong opposition which he expected it would encounter, and the impossibility, as he considered it, of carrying such a measure in the face of public opinion in India : " But Lord Ripon is so popular that there is no knowing what he could not carry." And this popularity seems to me to have been earned in the most legitimate manner and entirely by the conviction which you and your colleagues have been able to bring home to all classes that you and your Govt. were devoting your whole energies to measures for improving the condition of the people and developing the resources of the country. I can only regret in leaving the Office that I have not been able to do more to support you, and I can assure you that I have appreciated and sometimes been astonished at the immense amount of work which you have done and sent home to us. And notwithstanding some differences of opinion which have occasionally existed between us, I must thank you very

heartily for the temper in which you have received instructions which you have not altogether approved, and the patience with which you have endured our delays. I do not think I can part from you with a better wish than that the end of your term of government may be as successful and prosperous as its commencement, and that neither war nor famines may interrupt the great works you have in hand.

CHAPTER XIX  
POLITICAL REFORMS  
(1882-1884)

IF in the economic field Ripon found himself compelled to resist the pressure of the school of doctrinaire Radicals to which he more or less nominally belonged at home, he avenged himself and his friends when he came to deal with the larger political problems of Indian statesmanship, though here, too, his independence of doctrinaire pedantry was made sufficiently manifest. The guiding inspiration of all his political reforms is set forth with characteristic frankness and diffuseness in the memorandum on Local Self-government which he addressed to the Secretary of State towards the end of 1882 :

“ No one who watches the signs of the times in this country with even moderate care can doubt that we have entered upon a period of change : the spread of education, the existing and increasing influence of a free Press, the substitution of legal for discretionary administration, the progress of railways, telegraphs, etc., the easier communication with Europe, and the more ready influx of European ideas, are now beginning to produce a marked effect upon the people ; new ideas are springing up ; new aspirations are being called forth ; the power of public opinion is growing and strengthening from day to day ; and a movement has begun which will advance with greater rapidity and force every year. Such a condition of affairs is one in

which the task of government, and especially practically despotic government, is beset with difficulties of no light kind ; to move too fast is dangerous, but to lag behind is more dangerous still ; and the problem is how to deal with this new-born spirit of progress, raw and superficial as in many respects it is, so as to direct it into a right course, and to derive from it all the benefits which its development is capable of ultimately conferring upon the country, and at the same time to prevent it from becoming, through blind indifference or stupid repression, a source of serious political danger. Considerations such as these give great importance to measures which, though small in themselves, are calculated to provide a legitimate outlet for the ambitions and aspirations which we have ourselves created by the education, civilization, and material progress which we have been the means of introducing into the country ; such measures will not only have an immediate effect in promoting gradually and safely the political education of the people, which is in itself a great object of public policy, but will also pave the way for further advances in the same direction, as that education becomes fuller and more widespread. It is only what ought to be expected by every thoughtful man that after 50 years of a free Press and 30 years of expanding education, with European ideas flowing into the country on every side, and old, indigenous customs, habits, and prejudices breaking down all round, as caste is breaking down through the instrumentality of railways and other similar influences, changes should be taking place in the thoughts, the desires, and the aims of the intelligent and educated men of the country which no wise and cautious Government can afford to disregard, and to which they must gradually adapt their system

of administration if they do not wish to see it broken to pieces by forces which they have themselves called into being, but which they have failed to guide and to control. And even if there were no such necessity as the present circumstances of the country create for meeting the needs and providing for the aspirations of a time of change and progress, it would always be an aim worthy of the English Government in India to train the people over whom it rules more and more as times goes on to take an intelligent share in the administration of their own affairs. Among the political objects attainable in India, I see at present none higher. The credit of having set that object before the Government of India belongs to a Conservative, not a Liberal statesman; but it surely behoves the friends of liberal principles in the wide, not in any narrow party sense of the words, not to let Lord Mayo's policy become unfruitful in their hands, nor to allow it to be stifled beneath the stolid indifference or the covert hostility of men who cannot understand its meaning or appreciate its wisdom. There are, of course, always two policies lying before the choice of the Government of India. The one is the policy of those who have established a free Press, who have promoted education, who have admitted natives more and more largely to the public service in various forms, and who have favoured the extension of self-government; the other is, that of those who hate the freedom of the Press, who dread the progress of education, and who watch with jealousy and alarm everything which tends, in however limited a degree, to give the Natives of India a larger share in the management of their own affairs. Between these two policies we must choose; the one means progress, the other means repression. Lord Lytton



chose the latter. I have chosen the former, and I am content to rest my vindication upon a comparison of the results.”<sup>1</sup>

In pursuance of the policy here laid down, Ripon had at one time meditated the possibility of introducing an elective element into the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils.<sup>2</sup> This idea, however, he abandoned for the policy of local self-government, which had the merit of offering a far wider educative scope.<sup>3</sup> Local committees managing in some degree small cesses devoted to such purposes as minor public works, elementary education, etc., already existed in various parts of India, and in some provinces there was a fair elective element in the municipal bodies. To encourage these institutions with a view to the political education of the country had been a recognized part of the policy of liberal-minded Indian statesmen, notably of Lord Mayo, who was responsible for a series of Acts—passed, however, after his death, by Northbrook in 1873—empowering Local Governments to appoint members of Municipal Committees by election.<sup>4</sup> Generally speaking, however, the idea of local self-government had languished, in default of active sympathy from above. This, as Ripon wrote to Gladstone, was really inherent in the Indian system :

“ India is governed by a Bureaucracy which, though I sincerely believe it to be the best that the world has ever seen, has still the faults and the dangers which belong to every institution of that kind ; among these faults is conspicuously a jealousy of allowing non-

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence with Secretary of State*, 1882, December 25, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, December 31, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> To Kimberley, January 20, 1883.

<sup>4</sup> “ Note on Principal Measures in the Home Department,” Appendix I, pp. 1-3.

officials to interfere in any way whatever with any portion, however restricted, of the administration of the country.”<sup>1</sup>

Ripon thus describes the genesis of his own plans to Hartington :

“ From an éarly period after my arrival here I turned my attention to the subject of Local Self-government. During my tour in 1880 the question was in various ways brought under my notice, and after I recovered from my illness at the end of that year I began to consider the subject carefully. I intimated to you at that time the direction in which my thoughts were tending ; but in answering my letter you did not touch on the point, and none of your subsequent letters contained any allusion to it. The question occupied my attention, however, a good deal from time to time, and after I came up here last year I began to collect information in regard to it. I cannot now recollect whether I spoke to Baring about it, or whether he took it up independently . . . but when he brought before me the draft of the Resolution on Provincial Agreements which was subsequently issued on 30th Sept. last, I found in it to my great satisfaction clear proofs of his concurrence in the views which my examination of the subject has led me to form.”<sup>2</sup>

This passage illustrates Ripon's habit of thinking out questions silently for himself, for there is singularly little mention of local self-government in his letters and speeches previously to the issue of the Resolution of September 1881. It should, however, be noted that he wrote to Baring on November 7, 1881 :

<sup>1</sup> October 5, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, July 13, 1882.

“ The credit is yours. . . . I feel convinced that you have laid the foundations of a system of Municipal Self-government which will confer increasing benefits.”

It was the quinquennial revision of the “ Provincial Contracts ” which gave Ripon his first opportunity of putting forward his policy of extending the principle of local self-government. Under Mayo’s scheme of Financial Decentralization, contracts were made between the Central and the Provincial Governments for the allocation of revenue and expenditure, and it had been the policy when these contracts came up for quinquennial revision to enlarge the sphere of the Provincial Governments. When in 1881 these contracts came up for revision in due course, the Government of India announced<sup>1</sup> that the time had come when these contracts “ should no longer ignore the question of Local Self-government ”—that is to say, that they should take into account the devolution of functions from provincial to local control, as well as from Imperial to Provincial—and that the Provincial Governments should report what items of receipt and charge could most suitably be transferred to local bodies. At the same time the extension of the elected element in such bodies was to be considered.

The policy thus indicated was accepted by the Local Governments “ on the whole loyally and in some cases cordially.” On May 18, 1882, a further Resolution was published in which the proposed lines for the introduction of Local Self-government were more definitely laid down. The scheme is thus explained by Ripon in a letter to Tom Hughes :

“ You will observe that the Resolution is so framed that while laying down a few broad general principles, it leaves a large discretion to Local Governments as to

<sup>1</sup> Resolution of September 30, 1881.

the mode in which those principles are to be carried out in different parts of the country. You will see that with regard to the election of members of local boards, we have not prescribed its immediate adoption everywhere. My own feeling is that the elective system may be at once considerably extended ; but I quite admit that it is not at present equally applicable to all districts, and that its extension must be gradual. The Resolution leaves to local governments the widest choice as to the mode of election to be adopted. The ordinary system at present where election exists is the simple vote with an uniform suffrage, but I have a good deal of doubt whether this is really the best system for India in the existing condition of the people. I do not want to change it hastily where it is in operation, but I should like to see other plans tried in other places. I am inclined to think that election by caste or occupations would in many cases be more consonant with the feelings of the people than direct election, and more likely to lead to the right sort of men coming forward as candidates. The introduction of the cumulative vote, if it could be made intelligible to the native mind, would bring about the same result, though in a different and less direct manner. As regards the extent of the Suffrage, though I am, as you know, radical enough on the subject at home, I do not think that India is yet fit for a low Suffrage ; I should therefore, generally speaking, keep it moderately high at present. What I want to secure by the extension of Local Self-government is not a representation of the people of an European Democratic type, but the gradual training of the best, most intelligent, and most influential men in the community to take an interest and an active part in the management of their local affairs.

But the point of the Resolution to which I attach most importance is that which relates to the position which, generally speaking, I desire to see occupied by the chief Executive officer of the District, etc., towards the Municipalities or local boards within his jurisdiction. The Resolution does not lay down any hard and fast rule on this subject, and I am quite aware that there will be districts in different parts of the country, where for a time at all events the local boards must be placed under the direct guidance of the District officer ; but I am strongly impressed with the conviction that this arrangement, though it may be necessary in some cases, is not in itself desirable, either as regards Boards or as regards the Executive Officers. If the Boards are to be of any use for the purpose of training the natives to manage their own affairs, they must not be overshadowed by the constant presence of the *Burra Sahib*, which may be freely translated 'big swell,' of the district ; they must be left gradually more and more to run alone, though watched from without by the Executive Authorities and checked if they run out of the right course. Unless a certain freedom of action is allowed them, the best men are not likely to wish to be upon them, and they will be filled with a less reliable sort of persons, or will be, as they so often are now, mere shams. It also seems to me that the position of the executive officer outside the board . . . will be more dignified and more impartial than it would be if he, as Chairman, had either dictated the proceedings or taken an active share in the controversies connected with them. . . . But though for these reasons I am desirous to keep the chief executive officers as much as possible off the Local Boards, you will see that the Resolution reserves to the Govern-

ment very full and complete powers of supervision and control, powers to oblige local boards to do their work efficiently, powers to prevent them from doing mischief. I hold it to be essential that the Government should possess these powers, and I should never hesitate to exercise them, whenever it might be necessary. Again, I should like you to understand that what I am trying to do is not to impose an English system on India, but to revive and extend the indigenous system of the country. That indigenous system we have done a great deal to destroy, but the remnants of it exist to a greater or less extent in most parts of the country, and it is upon those remnants that I hope to build up my edifice of Local Self-government ; that is why I prefer, as the Resolution indicates, small areas to large, as the unit of my arrangements ; in small areas it will be more easy to make full use of what remains of the Village system, and to let the superstructure of Local Government rise upon that ancient foundation.”<sup>1</sup>

This practical and cautious spirit runs through all Ripon's public utterances and private correspondence on the subject. He was also peculiarly careful to dwell on the need for patience. The principle must be extended gradually, the utmost latitude must be allowed to the Local Governments to frame their schemes in accordance with the special needs of the territories under their charge, and Officials must be prepared to see considerable losses of administrative efficiency. Lord Palmerston had said, there is in every town in England a clean party and a dirty party.

“ I have not the least doubt that there is a clean party and a dirty party in the towns and cities of India, and

<sup>1</sup> June 12, 1882. He writes, as was his custom, to other correspondents in practically identical terms.

I can quite understand that to men zealous for improvement it may often be trying to see important schemes, calculated to confer great benefit on a large community, postponed or marred or laid aside from ignorance, apathy, or indifference. But I may venture to say to those who may be not unnaturally impatient at such untoward occurrences that they should not let their impatience run away with them to the extent of allowing them to obstruct or abandon the principle of self-government."<sup>1</sup>

So long as a beginning was made in the direction of giving the Boards real responsibility—and in Ripon's opinion this could only be the case when they both could and did elect a non-official as their chairman—he was not inclined to press the Local Governments.

" No doubt there will be disappointment if it should turn out, as under the present circumstances is only too probable, that the Local Governments place the District officer at the head of most of the District Boards ; but so long as it is seen that the experiment of control from without is being tried in good faith, here and there, the best men will be content to await the result of that experiment in the hope that, if it is successful, the system of external control will be gradually extended. I am quite aware of the dislike with which the educated Native is regarded by many persons, and especially by men who, like Sir Ashley Eden, have a strong Philistine element in their composition.<sup>2</sup> I admit that our Western Education, in its present stage in India, does not unfrequently render its Eastern recipients vain and

<sup>1</sup> Reply to address from Delhi Municipality, November 5, 1881. This was his first speech dealing with the Resolution of September 30, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Eden was the chief opponent of Ripon's scheme on Kimberley's Council.

bumptious ; but the best way to bring them to their true bearings is to put them to the test of practical work, and to afford them every opportunity which we can of learning the difference between superficial and solid knowledge, and between talking and doing.”<sup>1</sup>

A section of Kimberley's Council, however, strongly objected to the policy of “Control from without.” As Eden said, “the Magistrate should lead, and not drive,” and Kimberley was inclined to favour this view.<sup>2</sup> There was thus a danger that the necessary legislative enactments might be so framed as to preclude entirely the principle of control from without which, in Ripon's opinion, was the main point of the scheme. Ripon was, however, determined to have his own way :

“ My name [he writes to Kimberley] has been, through various circumstances, connected in a special manner with the Local Self-government policy of the present Government of India, and that policy has obtained for me an amount of confidence and, I believe I may say, of attachment, on the part of the Natives throughout the country which has greatly surprised me.”<sup>3</sup>

And the usual hints of resignation followed,<sup>4</sup> to which Kimberley replied :

“ The weapon you wield, when you say that you doubt whether you can conduct the Indian Administration with advantage, is so powerful with me, both on personal

<sup>1</sup> To Kimberley, July 10, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> To Ripon, August 17, 1882, and June 15, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> To Kimberley, May 21, 1883.

<sup>4</sup> Kimberley had also criticized rather freely the first of the Local Self-government Bills, that which had been prepared for the Central Provinces.



and political grounds, that I hope you will use it mercifully.”<sup>1</sup>

During this controversy the agitation about the Ilbert Bill was gathering head, and Ripon's view as to the relative importance of the two measures is instructive.

“ It would, I am confident, have a far less mischievous effect from a political point of view if we were to give up the Criminal Procedure Bill, than if we should recede from our policy of Local Self-government.”<sup>2</sup>

Again :

“ It is one of the evils of the existing excitement that it interferes seriously with the progress of our Local Self-government arrangements, and of other measures of much greater real importance to the country than the Crim. Procedure Bill.”<sup>3</sup>

So also to Tom Hughes :

“ Please keep steadily in your mind that our Local Self-government Policy is of much more importance than Ilbert's Bill. The one is a policy looking onward to the future and intended to meet in time the great coming difficulty of our rule here ; the other is only a single measure, sound in its purpose and inevitable sooner or later, but which, except as witnessing to a principle, will have little practical effect.”<sup>4</sup>

Ripon was more fortunate than he expected in having the sympathy of the men at the heads of the local

<sup>1</sup> To Ripon, June 15, 1883.

To Kimberley, June 21, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> To Kimberley, June 21, 1883.

<sup>4</sup> June 16, 1883.

administrations, as well as of the subordinate "bureaucrats." The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab was Sir Charles Aitchison—"a real good man of the best Scotch type, with a strong infusion of Puritan force and righteousness about him," whose views on the subject seem entirely to have coincided with Ripon's own.<sup>1</sup> In the N.W. Provinces Lyall, though "a man of very subtle intellect, who sees so much to be said on both sides of every question that he often finds it hard to make up his mind which side to take," thoroughly approved of the policy, and carried it into effect "after a method of his own, by which he sets especial store."<sup>2</sup> In Madras, Grant Duff's Resolution on the subject "quite satisfies our requirements,"<sup>3</sup> while in Bengal Rivers Thompson had an interesting proposal of his own to establish a sort of "Local Government Board" to supervise local bodies generally. This scheme, despite Ripon's advocacy, was negatived from home; but the Local Self-government policy was nevertheless successfully established in Bengal. The Chief Commissioners of the less advanced provinces—Burma and the Central Provinces—fell in with equal readiness. The only serious opposition came from Bombay. The Presidency possessed already a fairly advanced system of Local Self-government, and the whole Service, from the Governor to the District Officers, showed a strong resentment of Ripon's interference. The Governor, Sir J. Fergusson, was a man of a type unsympathetic to Ripon, who was always laughing at his action in prohibiting the use of Macaulay's essays on Clive and Hastings as textbooks in the Bombay schools, lest they should prove subversive of loyalty. One of Fergusson's members of Council, Ashburner, was regarded by Ripon as the type of the old school of officer, who "when he was a District Officer told the Ryots what crops they

<sup>1</sup> To Kimberley, June 21, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> To Hartington, November 3, 1882.

were to grow on their land, and would not let them grow anything else, and firmly believes that this is the only way of carrying on Government in this country." The Government of Bombay published a Resolution in which it stated that the Government of India "insists on the introduction without delay of very radical measures" of self-government, and "placed on record" its opinion "that measures so extensive are premature." To this "very unseemly document," as Kimberley called it,<sup>1</sup> the Government of India sent a stiff reply, and Fergusson eventually "yielded with a very fair grace."<sup>2</sup>

In Ripon's own Council, Baring was of course a strong supporter of the policy; the others were mostly uninterested, but not in any way hostile.<sup>3</sup>

The general reception of the policy in India was favourable. The educated Natives were, of course, enthusiastic; it is, indeed, as the "father of Local Self-government" that Ripon is still remembered. Even the Anglo-Indian Press was not hostile until the Ilbert Bill controversy led to the indiscriminate denunciation of all Ripon's measures.<sup>4</sup> As regards the men who actually had to work the policy—the District Officers—they seem on the whole to have accepted it loyally, despite the opposition in Bombay. Lyall told Ripon: "I believe our best District Officers are heartily in favour of the policy of withdrawing the District Magistrate from the chairmanship when possible."<sup>5</sup> Grant Duff said: "I have now had an opportunity of discussing [the policy of Local Self-government] with some of our best men, and I am happy to say that, so far from finding any reluctance on their part to carry into effect your policy, they are ready to do so, not only as a matter of duty, but because they are persuaded

<sup>1</sup> To Ripon, January 11, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Ripon to Kimberley, May 21, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> To Mallet, August 4, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> To Hartington, May 25, 1882; to Kimberley, May 21, 1883.

<sup>5</sup> To Hartington, July 15, 1882.

that it is right and wise." <sup>1</sup> Of course, these men saw difficulties which Ripon, perhaps, had not realized. The letters from District Officers in the N.W. Provinces (published in the Parliamentary Return on Local Self-government) make it abundantly clear that, in the Districts, as distinct from the Municipalities of that Province, the election of non-official chairmen was at that time impossible, for the plain reason that no non-official could be got to stand, and no Board would elect a non-official if he did stand. Even in progressive Bengal the Districts, as distinct from the Municipalities, were apathetic. Rivers Thompson, who was a keen advocate of the policy, gives Ripon a sensible warning as to judging all natives from "the educated and intelligent gentlemen whom the Viceroy sees in his Council or in his drawing-room." <sup>2</sup>

Before he left India, Ripon had seen Local Self-government Acts passed for the majority of the Provinces, and in the remaining cases such Acts were passed soon after. They empowered the Local Government to extend the principle of election in Municipalities, District Boards, and in Boards formed for the subdivisions of Districts, and to permit such bodies to elect their own chairmen when deemed advisable. The success of the policy may very fairly be judged by the following extract from the "Decennial Report of the Moral and Material Progress of India" for the ten years ending 1891-2 (p. 92):

"The extension of the system of local administration, so far as the two main classes of corporations are concerned, has been regarded by the Government, not only as a measure of relief, whereby the higher executive officials might be enabled to divert their attention from the ever-increasing amount of detail to the

<sup>1</sup> Ripon to Hartington, July 15, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> July 7, 1882.

wider interests entrusted to their charge, but as a means, also, of political education. The overwhelming majority of the masses is, as will be seen later on in the course of this narrative, entirely illiterate, so that the duties and obligations of citizenship can be best brought home to it by such concrete examples as may be gleaned from sitting with one's neighbours in deliberation over the administration of funds in which the assembly has a direct and easily recognizable interest. Under former Governments such responsibilities were scarcely within the popular reach, and even in the present generation there are indications of the tendency to shrink from assuming them, and to delegate them to a class literary in proclivity, and thus more adaptable to the change of circumstances. Nevertheless, the strides made in the last ten years in the desired direction have been great; the powers and responsibilities of the corporations in question have been much increased, and, in all the more settled parts of the country, the State control has been gradually restricted to just the extent necessary for the due guidance of bodies constituted on principles so novel to the masses concerned. The elective system has been thoroughly established, though, owing to the astonishing number and variety of the communities that go to form the population of India, the field thus represented has to be extended by means of the reservation of a certain proportionate power of State nomination. The results, speaking generally, have been fairly successful, or, to put it otherwise, the expectations formed regarding them have not been disappointed, for it was not anticipated that, at the outset, the substitution of local confidence for trained experience would tend to maintain quite the same level of efficiency as had previously

characterized the administration of these bodies, but the view has been justified that the sacrifice is relatively a small one, and that every few years some progress is manifested."

At the same time the Report shows how almost universally in the districts where Boards were allowed to elect their own chairman, the Head of the District was elected.<sup>1</sup> This applies to a certain extent, though not so much, to Municipalities. On the other hand, the figures show a considerable preponderance of elected over nominated members. The history of Local Self-government has fully justified Kimberley's prophecy, that the chief danger lay in the apathy, not the activity, of the people.<sup>2</sup>

Less far-reaching as constructive reforms, but equally characteristic of the essentially Liberal activities of the Ripon régime, was the Viceroy's treatment of the Press and Education Questions.

The Repeal of the Vernacular Press Act, though not of great importance in itself, acquired an embittered prominence as a touchstone of what was held to be the vital difference between the Lyttonite and Riponite traditions.<sup>3</sup> Its real significance was even more limited. In 1870 a section had been introduced into the Penal Code, making it penal to attempt to excite disaffection

<sup>1</sup> The privilege was not universally appreciated. Mr. Harold Cox writes: "In 1886 or 1887, travelling through the Punjab, I discussed the matter with a venerable Sikh gentleman in the railway carriage. Speaking very slowly, he said: 'I do not know what to think of the matter myself, but my friends who do understand politics do tell me that Lord Ripon's self-government is only a device of the British Government to make Hindus and Mahommedans hate each other more than they did before.' He then went on to explain that as long as the English official was *ex officio* chairman he held the balance evenly between Hindus and Mahommedans, but now they quarrelled like cats and dogs over the election of the chairman, whose impartiality was always suspect."

<sup>2</sup> To Ripon, January 11, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> For the early history of attempts to control the Press in India see Balfour: *Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 502 et seq.

against the Government ; but it had proved ineffective. In fact, the chances of obtaining a conviction under it were so uncertain that it remained a dead letter. In 1875 the Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury, drew the attention of the Government of India to some particularly flagrant articles which had come under his notice ; but the Advocate-General advised the Government that, though the articles constituted an offence under the Code, the chance of a conviction would depend so much on the view which the judge might take of the law that the result of a trial could not be predicted. In 1878 the opinion of the Local Governments was taken on the question of legislative action, and all except Madras expressed themselves in favour of it in some form or another. Lytton had a Bill drafted giving the Magistrate power, with the consent of the Local Government, to take security from a newspaper that it should not publish any matter (*a*) of a seditious nature or (*b*) having for its object extortion. The Local Government might, after warning, declare the security forfeited ; or it might seize the plant of a paper which had not deposited security. An appeal might be made to the Government of India, but there was no appeal to any judicial body. The Act only applied to Vernacular papers, and only to such parts of British India as the Governor of India might proclaim for the purpose. Lytton telegraphed a summary of the Bill to the Secretary of State, and, on the plea of urgency, obtained leave to pass it through the Legislative Council at a single sitting, and before the Secretary of State had seen the full text. This procedure was strongly criticized by three of the members of the Secretary of State's Council ; but the majority of that body were in favour of leaving the Act to its operation, subject to the amendment of some subsidiary provisions.

The Act and the method of passing it were strongly resented by Liberals in Parliament, who naturally regarded it as a serious infringement of the liberty of

the Press. Indeed, of all Lytton's measures of internal policy this excited the utmost uproar among his opponents. The obvious criticisms of the Act, apart from the general objection that it curtailed the liberty of the Press, were :

(1) That it was invidious to apply the provisions to vernacular papers only, and not to papers written in English.

(2) That it was oppressive to refuse an appeal to any judicial authority.

(3) That it was not likely to prove really effective.

These criticisms had much weight with the home public, and not unreasonably. It was especially noted that in regard to (2) the Act differed from the Irish Press Act which Lytton had himself quoted in support of his measure. When, in 1910, another Indian Press Act became necessary, the precedent was definitely renounced, and a clause was introduced providing for Appeals to the High Court against the enforcement of penalties. As for criticism (3), it proved an accurate prophecy. During the four years of its existence the Act was never once put fully into force. This might be attributed to its efficiency as a deterrent ; but Ripon, at least, was of a contrary opinion. He held that the articles which had been quoted to justify the Act were nothing worse than " horrid rubbish," and that the stuff written by similar papers after the passing of the Act continued to be horrid rubbish.<sup>1</sup>

When the Liberals came to power, the repeal of the Act was a foregone conclusion. Ripon, however, did not find immediate action very easy.

" I see that you have been asked questions in the House of Commons about the License Tax and the Vernacular Press Act. . . . I have given some attention to [the latter] already, but not enough to say whether it would be wise

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, July 12, 1880.



to repeal it at once or not. Anyhow, it will require delicate management if the repeal is determined on, as the majority of the Legislative Council have committed themselves to its support, and their concurrence is necessary for its repeal."<sup>1</sup>

Hartington replied that the party in the House of Commons, and Gladstone more than anyone, were extremely anxious for repeal or modification, and on January 28, 1881, an official dispatch was sent to India<sup>2</sup> suggesting that the repeal might be considered, and that, if thought necessary, the Clause in the Penal Code might be amended so as to facilitate the suppression of seditious writing by means of the ordinary law.

The unanimity of the principal officials in India in favour of retaining the Act did not unduly impress Ripon :

"It has not the same weight as it would have ordinarily, because of the marked sensitiveness to personal and race criticism and the want of any grasp of the principles of Press freedom which the papers disclose. The discussions remind me more of the arguments of the French Conservatives of the time of Louis XVIII and Charles X than of anything else which I have ever read."<sup>3</sup>

It would have been possible for Ripon to proceed by administrative action alone, as, under the wording of the Act, he could have withdrawn all parts of India from its operation, but from this he was averse.<sup>4</sup> The important thing was to get the Act off the Statute Book. The accomplishment of this was a signal example

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, June 29, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Ripon had privately asked for this to be done. (To Hartington, December 30, 1880.)

<sup>3</sup> To Hartington, July 12, 1880.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

of Ripon's diplomatic skill. When the matter was first raised in Council in February 1881, only Baring was in favour of repeal ; but there was a possible line of compromise in the coupling of repeal with the strengthening of the Penal Code as suggested in the Secretary of State's dispatch.

“ If nothing can be done with the Penal Code [writes the Viceroy], I must try my hand at diplomacy with the more reasonable members of Council ; but I am not very sanguine as to the result, and, if I fail, the question at once arises whether I should overrule the majority or not.”<sup>1</sup>

Had he done so, he would still have had to face a majority on the Legislative Council opposed to the repeal. In time, of course, he could so fill vacancies as they occurred as to have majorities on both the Executive and Legislative Councils, but in the meantime there would be “ an angry and impatient House of Commons ” to reckon with.

Ripon's first plan was to overrule his Executive Council and to fill up the existing vacancies on the Legislative Council with safe men, and propose to them that the Act should be repealed :

“ If we are beaten in the Legislative Council by a majority of one, it seems that you would have an easier task in counselling patience, because you would be able to show that the Government at home and the Governor-General here had done everything in their power to get the Act repealed, and that by changes which would necessarily take place in the composition of the Legislative Council before the next Calcutta session, the success of a repealing Bill will be rendered certain.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, February 12, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Hartington, on the other hand, wished Ripon not to overrule his Executive Council, but to allow the majority to dissent from the proposed repeal. Their opinions would then be sent home, with those of the others, in an official dispatch ; and the decision would then rest with the Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup> Ripon, however, was not driven to either of these courses. He was able, two days after receiving the above telegram, to arrange a compromise. A reply was to be sent to the Secretary of State's dispatch, admitting that the Act was open to grave objections, and pledging the Indian Government to take measures for the repeal thereof at the next winter session of the Legislative Council. In the meantime, the local governments were to be consulted as to the advisability of stiffening the Penal Code on the subject of seditious publications. To this compromise Ripon assented, he said, with great reluctance. " I very much regret that I have been unable to get the Council to agree to the immediate repeal of this detestable law."<sup>2</sup> But the arrangement had the advantage of enabling Hartington to announce publicly the forthcoming repeal of the Act.

The final upshot, as related in the following extract, shows a remarkable change of spirit in the Council in the course of eight months :

" I telegraphed to you after the meeting of Council on Wednesday to say that we had decided to repeal the V.P. Act without attempting to tinker the Penal Code. This is a great satisfaction to me, and I hope now that in a very short time the Indian Statute book will be cleansed from that wretched piece of legislation. Gibbs was the only member of Council who expressed any hesitation about the simple repeal. I did not expect to get the matter settled so easily, as the great majority

<sup>1</sup> Telegram to Ripon, February 14, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> To Hartington, February 19, 1881.

of the Local Authorities consulted were in favour of some amendment of the Penal Code. The fact is that the Indian official regards the Press as an evil, necessary perhaps, but to be kept within as narrow limits as possible; he has no real feelings of the benefits of free discussion.”<sup>1</sup>

The Executive Council, while assenting to the repeal of the Act, suggested that Press offences should be made cognizable by the district magistrate, and that steps should be taken to prevent the importation of seditious publications from abroad. They also reserved the right to take special steps should a state of things arise requiring measures beyond what the Penal Code permitted.<sup>2</sup>

Ripon's policy in regard to Education was in a sense part of the larger policy which dictated his scheme of Local Self-government, for while the standard of primary education remained low, it was hopeless to expect the best results from self-government in any form. He had, however, long been interested in Indian education for its own sake, and on the eve of his departure from England he promised a deputation which waited upon him to take up the question during his Viceroyalty.<sup>3</sup>

The Educational system of India was founded mainly on Sir C. Wood's dispatch of 1854, but in the course of time there had been some divergence from the lines therein laid down. Not sufficient attention had, in Ripon's opinion, been paid to primary education, as compared with the higher forms. The political danger was obvious of developing a “small class of highly cultivated natives addressing themselves to ignorant and uncultivated masses.”<sup>4</sup> The policy which Ripon advocated was, (a) to free education as far as possible from official control, and to allow free play to the natural development of local institutions, by adopting a system

<sup>1</sup> To Hartington, October 29, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *Narrative of Principal Events in the Home Department*, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206; *Speeches of Ripon in India*, vol. i, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> Minute by Ripon; see letter to Hartington, June 3, 1881.

of grants in aid rather than of Government establishments<sup>1</sup>; and (b) to get as much money as possible from private sources, by encouraging private endowments, and compelling the wealthy classes to pay a fair price for the education of their sons, so that money might be forthcoming for the diffusion of primary education.

In order to overhaul the whole question, Ripon appointed a Commission in 1881 with wide terms of reference. This Commission reported in October 1883, and the report was submitted home and circulated to local governments. A year later the Government published an important Resolution, embodying generally the recommendations of the Commission; but Ripon's reign was then too near its close for him to take further steps to give effect to his policy. The work of the Commission, none the less, remains one of the signal monuments of his Viceroyalty.

Another question on which Ripon did excellent spade-work of a Liberal kind was in connexion with the admission of Indians to superior appointments in the Civil Service. When he went to India there were two ways in which Indians could enter the higher branches of the Civil Service: by competition in the I.C.S. examination in London, or by nomination to the "Statutory Civil Service" created by Lytton. Lytton, while fully recognizing the necessity for employing a greater number of Indians in the higher branches of the Service, had desired to get hold of men of good social standing rather than of high intellectual qualifications. His first proposal had been to establish a close Native Civil Service, which should have the monopoly of a certain number of posts hitherto reserved for the I.C.S., and also of a certain number hitherto held by "Uncovenanted" officers.<sup>2</sup> This scheme was negatived at

<sup>1</sup> This was the foundation of Ripon's Education policy in England in 1870. (*Supra*, vol. i, Cap. XI.)

<sup>2</sup> The Uncovenanted Service consisted of men recruited in India, the great majority being Indians, who held the bulk of the appointments below the grade of District Magistrate and District Judge.

home, and instead it was enacted that a proportion of the total number of recruits for the Civil Service, not exceeding one-fifth, should be natives selected by the local governments, subject to the approval of the Governor-General, who must be men of good family and education and possessed of fair abilities and education, to whom the prospect offered by the Uncovenanted Civil Service had not proved a sufficient inducement to come forward.<sup>1</sup> Thus was constituted the "Statutory Civil Service," which endured for eight years, when it was abolished in favour of the so-called "Provincial" Service, which still exists. The objections to the Statutory Civil Service were that it meant the selection of young men without either a guarantee of intellectual fitness or the advantage of administrative experience. This created a natural dissatisfaction, both among the "Uncovenanted" Indian officials, who saw their less competent compatriots put in over their heads, and also among the educated Indian middle classes. To Ripon the scheme appeared characteristic of Lytton's hatred of the Indian "Intellectuals."

The educated Indian had another grievance in the fact that, in 1876, the maximum age of admission for the I.C.S. examination had been reduced from 21 to 19. This had had the twofold result that Indian candidates were severely handicapped, inasmuch as by that age they could hardly hope to attain the necessary proficiency in English to compete successfully, and that the English lads who entered for the examination were, as a class, "raw and immature in character and defective in general culture and experience."<sup>2</sup> Both these results were regarded by Ripon with grave distaste, and the former especially as being dangerous from a political point of view. There was a widespread feeling among the educated Indians—probably justified

<sup>1</sup> Balfour: *Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 534.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Markoy, quoted by Ripon in his letter to Kimberley, April 25, 1884.

so far as Lytton was concerned—that the reduction of the age-limit was part of a deliberate plan to exclude the Indian “Intellectuals” from the Service, and this idea gained colour from the fact that Lytton, in putting forward his original scheme, had tentatively proposed that Indians should be debarred altogether from entering for the I.C.S. examination.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the agitation for the restoration of the older age-limit was strong and persistent. The matter was raised in September 1883; but it was thought that, in view of the Ilbert Bill controversy, which was then at its height, it had best not be taken up for the present.<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Ripon about the same time expressed himself in favour of simultaneous examinations for the I.C.S. in India and England.<sup>3</sup> This, however, aroused the strongest protests from his Council, and even Baring expressed himself against it.<sup>4</sup>

In September 1884 the Government of India, in a despatch, raised the whole question of the recruitment of Indians for the superior branches of the Civil Service.<sup>5</sup> They desired to facilitate the entrance of Indians through the I.C.S. examination by raising the age-limit and by including an Oriental language among the subjects which might be taken, and they proposed to appoint annually to the superior Service a number of Indians who, together with the number passing into the I.C.S., should make 18 per cent of the total recruitment to the superior posts. These appointments were to be made by the Local Governments, who were to make their own rules for selecting candidates, subject to the approval of the Government of India. A certain standard of intellectual attainment was to be insisted on. The attempt to confine recruitment for superior

<sup>1</sup> Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 531.

<sup>2</sup> To Kimberley, September 29, 1883 (Enclosure).

<sup>3</sup> Note of July 26, 1883, enclosed in letter to Kimberley, August 30, 1883.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes and Notes by the Viceroy. The House of Commons passed a resolution in favour of simultaneous examinations in 1892.

<sup>5</sup> *Narrative of Principal Events, Home Dept.*, p. 339.

posts to men of high family had, they said, failed. Promotion from the Uncovenanted Service was to be encouraged.

The question was left in this state by Ripon. It was settled by the Public Services Commission appointed by Lord Dufferin, whose recommendations, largely on the lines of Ripon's suggestions, formed the basis of the system which prevailed until the subject was reconsidered by the Public Services Commission of 1914-17.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE ILBERT BILL

(1883-1884)

ON October 2, 1882, Ripon wrote to Hartington :

“ If you back me up in Local Self-government, it is not likely that during the remainder of my stay here I shall give you much more trouble.”

And on the 12th :

“ With the exception of Education, Land Revenue Assessment is probably the last great subject with which I shall attempt to deal while I remain here.”

This was written after the issue of the official dispatch proposing to introduce the “ Criminal Procedure Code Amendment Bill ”—the famous Ilbert Bill. Hence it is clear that Ripon did not attach any great importance to this measure. When, later, the storm broke, several friends in England expressed the opinion, somewhat late in the day, that he was going too fast in the matter of reforms. Tom Hughes wrote :

“ I sat next Miss Lyall yesterday and drew her as cautiously as I could as to her brother’s opinion, and unless I mistake her I can see that he, though thoroughly loyal as to the scope and aim of your policy and enthusiastic as to you personally, is troubled as to the pace.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> February 23, 1883.

Northbrook,<sup>1</sup> Halifax,<sup>2</sup> and Chichele Plowden all hinted that, in starting so many reforms, Ripon had "bit off more than he could chew." But Ripon's own words quoted above, as well as the many occasions on which he says that he would never have brought in the Bill had he known what an uproar it would cause, show that he had realized as well as anyone that there was a limit to the amount of reform that India could stand at one time.

The Bill, in truth, was far less a part of Ripon's reforming policy than a normal outcome of certain necessities—by no means urgent—of the administrative evolution of India. Previously to 1872 judicial officers of the interior had not possessed power to try European British subjects, except for some minor offences, and could only commit them for trial before a High Court. In that year the Criminal Procedure Code was amended, and certain powers of fine and imprisonment were given to district magistrates and sessions judges and certain of their assistants. This was, of course, a diminution of the privileges of the white community in the interior, and the representatives of that community on the Select Committee of the Legislative Council which dealt with the Bill bargained that these powers should not be exercised by natives over European British subjects. The Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal were all opposed to this stipulation, but it was carried largely through the support of Fitzjames Stephen. Now, as we have already seen, Indians had for some time been gaining admittance sporadically into the I.C.S. through competitive examination, and in 1879 Lytton had instituted a scheme by which selected Indians were to be nominated to posts ordinarily held by the I.C.S. in the proportion of one-sixth of the total annual recruitment. Ripon, it may be noted, did not like this scheme, for the selections were apt to produce a type of recruit "bene

<sup>1</sup> February 2, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> March 2, 1883.

nati, bene vestiti, et modice docti," as he himself remarks. There were thus two kinds of Indian in the higher service : (1) Lytton's men, known as " Statutory Civil Servants " and (2) the " Competition wallahs." It is obvious that the claims of these two classes to absolute equality with the white I.C.S. man were on different footings. The " Statutories " had not, like the others, competed against white men ; they had not necessarily crossed the sea and partaken of English life ; and they were, as has been indicated, of comparatively inferior mental calibre. Moreover, none of the Statutories would anyhow be in a position to exercise important jurisdiction for another ten years, seeing that they were all newly recruited, whereas in the case of three of the " competition wallahs " it was already an urgent question, inasmuch as they had reached a stage of seniority when they had, or might at any time have, charge of a district. Also the grant of the concession to the " competition wallahs " only would have been a less important step, as they could never be a numerous body, while the " Statutories " would eventually be one-sixth of the whole service.

The possibility of administrative difficulties had been considered before Ripon's arrival. The Government of Bengal had pointed out that in many subdivisions European officers were needed to exercise the powers of a J.P. (i.e. to try Englishmen), and had asked to be allowed to appoint some Europeans as " Deputy Collectors." This was against standing orders, for deputy collectors belonged to the " Uncovenanted Civil Service," which, with certain exceptions, was reserved for Indians. The Government of India refused the request, but said in their reply : " The Legislative Department will be moved to reconsider the existing law to determine whether natives may not be invested with the powers of a J.P." That was written on August 28, 1880, when Ripon was barely in the saddle. The question was brought up again in 1882 in the following circumstances :

“We are about to send you . . . a Despatch upon an important subject to which I would beg you to give your early attention. The native members of the Civil Service—both those who have got in by competition at home, and those who are being admitted every year out here under the system established in Lytton’s time—will ere long be rising to positions in which, although they are in all other respects on an equal footing with their English colleagues, they will, under the provisions of the existing law, be precluded from trying Europeans in the Mofussil.<sup>1</sup> In the Presidency towns, by a strange anomaly, natives are allowed to exercise over Europeans a jurisdiction from which they are debarred outside the limits of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. It is clear that an invidious distinction of this kind between members of the same service cannot be maintained. When we were passing the Bill for amending the Criminal Procedure Code through the Legislative Council at Calcutta last winter, one of the leading Native members of the Council, Maharajah Sir Jotindra Mohun Tagore, was anxious to bring the subject forward and move amendments in the Bill with a view to giving Native Civil Servants jurisdiction over Europeans. The Bill was then in its last stage, and I pointed out to the Maharajah, in a private conversation with him, that it would be impossible for the Government to make so important a change in the law at such short notice. I begged him, therefore, not to move his amendments, but promised that the Government would take the subject into its consideration without delay. Very shortly afterwards Sir Ashley Eden<sup>2</sup> sent us a letter saying

<sup>1</sup> “Mofussil” means all districts outside the three Presidency towns, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

<sup>2</sup> Then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

that in his opinion the existing law on the subject could not be maintained, and explaining the manner in which he thought it should be altered. We therefore sent a circular to Local Governments generally, asking their opinion on the matter, and they have all, with the insignificant exception of Coorg, decided in favour of an alteration of the present law. Sir Charles Aitchison, with whom I personally agree, would go somewhat further than the rest of the heads of Governments; but the majority of the Council prefer to adopt a course more in accordance with the views of the Local Governments. Baring agrees with Aitchison and myself, and General Wilson is opposed to all change of the law. Hope, *more suo*, has given expression to a crotchet in a separate minute, and Sir Donald Stewart . . . prefers a plan suggested by Lyall to that which is recommended in the Despatch. The point of difference is a small one. . . . If the arrangements put forward in Hope's minute were to be adopted, and the power of trying Europeans were to be given only to Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges, it would really confine the concession in practice to the latter only, as District Magistrates everywhere have as a rule too much to do with their administrative duties and appellate work to try original cases. The apparent concession would therefore be a practical sham; and in a case like this, in which we have to deal with very strong feelings, it is better to do nothing than to expose the Government to a charge of having pretended to do an act of justice to the Native members of the Civil Service while, in reality, leaving them in very much the same position as that which they occupy at present."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ripon to Hartington, September 8, 1882.

Sir Ashley Eden's letter here referred to was an official letter from the Bengal Government forwarding a note by Mr. B. L. Gupta, of the Bengal Civil Service, which stated very moderately the case for amending the Code, and suggested that, for the present, it would be enough to grant the extended jurisdiction to Indians holding the office of Magistrate of the District or of Sessions Judge. The comment of the Government of Bengal was wholly sympathetic.

“As a question of general policy, it seems to the Lieutenant-Governor right that covenanted native civilians should be empowered to exercise jurisdiction over Europeans as well as over natives who are brought before them in their capacity as criminal judges. Now that native covenanted civilians may shortly be expected to hold the office of district magistrate or sessions judge, it is also, as a matter of administrative convenience, desirable that they should have the power to try all classes of persons brought before them. Moreover, if this power is not conferred upon native members of the Civil Service, the anomaly may be presented of a European joint magistrate, who is subordinate to a native district magistrate or sessions judge, being empowered to try cases which his immediate superior cannot try. Native Presidency magistrates within the Presidency towns exercise the same jurisdiction over Europeans that they do over natives, and there seems to be no sufficient reason why covenanted native civilians, with the position and training of district magistrate or sessions judge, should not exercise the same jurisdiction over Europeans as is exercised by other members of the service.

For these reasons Sir Ashley Eden is of opinion that the time has now arrived when all native members of

the Covenanted Civil Service should be relieved of such restrictions of their powers as are imposed on them by Chapter XXXIII of the new Code of Criminal Procedure, or when at least native covenanted civilians who have attained the position of district magistrate or sessions judge should have entrusted to them full powers over all classes, whether European or native, within their jurisdiction."

The words "covenanted civilian" here used are ambiguous. Strictly the term applies only to persons appointed by the Secretary of State in England—that is the "competition wallahs." But it was ordinarily used to include "statutories" as well. Gupta in his Note so uses it, and as the Government of Bengal's letter makes no comment on the use, it seems clear that Sir Ashley Eden meant to use it in the same general sense. The point is interesting because later, after the agitation against the Bill had begun, Eden tried to make out that he had only meant to suggest that natives appointed by competition in England should have the privilege.

Ripon's disparaging reference to Hope's "crotchet" is not a little unfair. It will be seen that Hope's proposal, which was to confine the privilege to District Magistrates and Sessions Judges, went as far as Gupta's own request, and it was on the whole more in accordance with the opinions of the Local Governments—though these vary. Had it been adopted, the chances of an agitation would have been minimized.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the further concessions which the Despatch proposed were not so important as Ripon's remarks make out. Indeed, when the question of compromise arose later, Ripon referred to this part of the proposals as the

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Maine, in his Note, which Hartington lost (*infra*, p. 138), expresses preference for "the cautious and sensible modification proposed by Mr. Hope." (Sir Theodore Hope was Member of Council in charge of the Public Works Department.)

“ mere fringe ” of the measures, and of no particular importance.

The Government of India's proposals were shortly as follows :

“ We propose to confine the office of justice of the peace, and with it the power of trying European British subjects, to those persons, whether European or native, who have received a training that may be presumed to guarantee the possession of the qualities required for the proper disposal of such cases. In this view we think that all district magistrates and sessions judges should be vested with the powers in question in virtue of their office, and by a definite provision in the law ; and we would empower the local governments, outside the Presidency towns, to confer these powers upon those members (*a*) of the Covenanted Civil Service, (*b*) of the Native Civil Service constituted under the Statutory Rules, and (*c*) of the Non-Regulation Commissions, who are already exercising first-class magisterial powers, and are, in their opinion, fit to be intrusted with these further powers. We would make no distinction in the law between European and native officers. We consider that the care exercised in the selection of officers for the Covenanted Service, both in regulation and non-regulation Provinces, together with the subsequent training that they receive, warrants our amending the law in the manner proposed. As a fact, no officer would be eligible until he had passed all the departmental examinations, and been in training long enough to show the superior authorities whether he would be likely to use any powers conferred upon him with proper discretion. These proposals will completely remove from the law all distinctions based on the race of the judge. The limitations remaining on the juris-



diction of particular classes of magistrates will be based, not on any difference of race, but simply on differences of training and experience."

At first everything seemed to promise a smooth passage of the Bill and its unruffled acceptance by the general public. What little criticism there was in the clubs and the newspapers was casual, and wholly unimpassioned, while the officials everywhere were overwhelmingly sympathetic. Even the few who, for one reason or another, doubted the wisdom of the measure, had no suspicion of the depth of feeling it was destined to touch. This was the case even with the highest officials in Calcutta. It has already been mentioned that the opinions of the Local Governments were practically all favourable,<sup>1</sup> but they did not stand alone. Ripon also circularized the heads of Local Governments unofficially, and quite frankly stated to them his personal opinion "that all members of the Covenanted Service, whether European or Native, ought to be placed on the same footing."<sup>2</sup> Again the replies were favourable. Sir C. Elliott did, indeed, sound a note of warning from Assam, but he made no mention of the possibility of an European agitation. He merely expressed his doubts as to whether native judges could be trusted to judge Europeans without racial bias. The only actual warning which Ripon got as to what he might expect from the European community occurs in an unimpressive minute of one of the Madras Members of Council; but the official opinion of the Madras

<sup>1</sup> It should be mentioned that it had not been thought necessary to ask for the opinion of the Government of Bengal, because they had already furnished it in the letter from Sir Ashley Eden quoted above. This was a little unfortunate, as, between the writing of that letter and the circularization of the Local Governments, Sir Ashley Eden had been succeeded as Lieutenant-Governor by Rivers Thompson, who was one of the strongest opponents of the Bill, and who subsequently made a grievance of not having had a chance to comment on it.

<sup>2</sup> April 21, 1882.

Government was favourable, and, had it been otherwise, Madras, in those days, was considered to be so hopelessly out of touch with the main currents of Indian life as to render its dissent negligible.<sup>1</sup>

When the Bill reached London, the experts of Whitehall were apparently very much in the same case as their colleagues in India. The Secretary of State in Council accorded his official sanction without reservation, and not a hint of any misgivings was communicated to Ripon. Accordingly, on February 2, 1883, the Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by Sir Courtenay Ilbert,<sup>2</sup> the new Legal Member. Then, with dramatic suddenness, the storm broke.

Within a few weeks the whole of the British community in the Peninsula was swept by a tornado of violent denunciation of the Bill. A monster indignation meeting took place in the Calcutta Town Hall, at which the speeches were of an intemperance beyond all limits of decency. Similar meetings were held all over the Presidency, and the Anglo-Indian press—notably the *Englishman*—became utterly hysterical. An “Anglo-Indian and European Defence Association” was formed, which became the official organization of the movement. Among other features of their campaign, the Volunteers were openly incited to resign in a mass, and certain persons even “sounded opinions in the canteens”—in other words attempted to seduce the Army. The non-official community boycotted Ripon’s levees, and there was a proposal to boycott the Government loan. On his return to Calcutta in the winter, the Viceroy was openly insulted in the streets by planters brought down from the Mofussil for the occasion. An emissary named Atkins was sent to England to arouse the British working-man against the Bill. The wife of the Chief

<sup>1</sup> Ripon to Kimberley, March 4, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Although it fell to Ilbert to frame the Bill, and it has ever since been known by his name, he was not its originator, for he only arrived in India in May 1882, after the Circular to the Local Governments had been issued.

Justice showed her appreciation of the responsibility attaching to her husband's official position by getting up a "Ladies' petition" against the Bill. Ripon gives a quotation from the letters of a certain "Britannicus" (*sic!*), who wrote to the *Englishman* regularly on the subject: "The only people who have any right to India are the British: the SO-CALLED (*sic*) Indians have no right whatever."<sup>1</sup> The behaviour of the natives in the face of this campaign was, on the whole, surprisingly moderate, though of course the extreme newspapers on their side replied in kind to the European attacks.<sup>2</sup> A few assaults by low-class natives of doubtful sanity on white women were quite unjustifiably referred to a political origin by the opponents of the Bill.

Of the causes of the intense feeling thus displayed, there are two more or less conflicting explanations. Ripon and his advisers believed that it was the outcome of a gradually growing resentment at their progressive policy, which the Anglo-Indians regarded as designed to "put the native on the *Gaddi*,"<sup>3</sup> and that the Calcutta Bar, having special reasons for disliking the Government, seized on the Ilbert Bill as a promising subject for an agitation.<sup>4</sup> Ripon appears to have investigated this story and convinced himself of its accuracy:

"The Bar have been very sore about the reduction of the Judges' pay<sup>5</sup> and Mitter's appointment as Acting

<sup>1</sup> This is more correctly given by Baring in a pamphlet on "Recent Events in India" (p. 20): "The only people who have any right to India are the British. . . Privileges the so-called Indians have which we do not begrudge them, and for which they ought to be grateful instead of clamouring for more and abusing the British if they do not get what they clamour for."

<sup>2</sup> To Kimberley, September 21, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> "Gaddi" = throne.

<sup>4</sup> Sir J. Gibbs to Ripon, April 17, 1883.

<sup>5</sup> The pay of the High Court Judges had been reduced at the instance of Hartington, though Ripon had been personally opposed to it.

Chief Justice,<sup>1</sup> and were only too glad of an opportunity to do the Government an injury if they could ; and the idea of an opposition to the Bill was started in the Bar Library by some of the English barristers. Communications were entered into with the *Englishman* office, and circulars in the shape of letters were sent to the Planters and settlers up-country suggesting their opposition to the Bill, and, I fancy, putting a strong fanciful case before them. They took the bait, and urged their correspondents and agents here to move in the matter, and hence the opposition took firm hold and prospered. The delay between the 2nd and 19th February, when the fiercer opposition broke out, is accounted for by the time it took to communicate with up-country and get replies before the matter could be prominently mooted in Calcutta. Once set off it acquired force by moving, and its climax was reached on 28th February at the Town Hall.”<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, there is an interesting letter to Sir Henry Primrose, Ripon's Private Secretary, from the Head of the Criminal Intelligence Department, Mr. Lambert, which attributes the origin of the agitation to the capitalists in Calcutta who owned the plantations and tea gardens, and who feared that if natives were established as judges their white agents would not get proper justice in the Criminal Courts, and they themselves would suffer in their pockets.

“Then to make their grievance a general one they raised the cry of danger to European women. . . . The present Government has been long enough thought to

<sup>1</sup> The first occasion on which a native had been appointed to the post. The Chief Justice, Sir P. Garth, had been furious and had threatened not to take furlough at all if Mitter was to sit for him.

<sup>2</sup> To Kimberley, April 20, 1883.

be leaning towards Natives at the expense of Europeans ; but these agitators held silence when Natives were advanced to important posts, when Local Self-government was brought forward, when the Rurki Bill <sup>1</sup> was passed. It is the Breeches Pocket question which has started the present agitation. On looking about for support they found one portion of the community which disliked a Native Chief Justice, another which disliked Native Civilians, another which disliked the local S.G. scheme, and the Eurasians who disliked the Rurki Bill. These disconnected atoms all flew together, while those who had not interest in any of these questions, at least were sensitive on anything affecting European women."

The latter cry was the most effective of all the emotional elements of the agitation. It was crystallized by Meredith Townsend <sup>2</sup> of the *Spectator* in a letter to Tom Hughes :

"Would you like to live in a country where at any moment your wife would be liable to be sentenced on a false charge of slapping an Ayah to three days' imprisonment, the Magistrate being a copper-coloured Pagan who probably worships the Linga, and certainly exults in any opportunity of showing that he can insult white persons with impunity ?"

But whatever the exact tactics which precipitated and directed the explosion, there can be no doubt that the final cause was a deep-seated and even passionate aversion to the principle underlying the Bill. It seems equally certain that the Indian Government and bureaucracy displayed a lamentable incompetence in

<sup>1</sup> This Bill confined admittance to the Engineering College to Asiatics of pure blood.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly editor of the *Friend of India*.

ignoring this sentiment, or at any rate in miscalculating its intensity. The problem, indeed, touched one of the weak spots in the official hierarchy, which was and had always been more or less out of touch with the non-official community. There was quite a long tradition of misunderstanding between the two bodies, dating from the days of the Company's feuds with the "interlopers." Halifax voiced the feeling of the average Indian official when, for quite other reasons, he wrote to Ripon: <sup>1</sup> "The class of persons for whose opinion I have the least regard are the non-official English." No share of the blame, however, appears to attach to Ripon himself. Although he earnestly believed in the principle of the Bill and was as little edified as Halifax by the opinions of its opponents, it was no part of his scheme of Indian policy. He did not originate it, and he was never eager for it. It was essentially a question for his responsible advisers and experts, and, recognizing this, he acted with all his characteristic caution in leaving himself in their hands. The case for his exculpation, as he himself sets it forth, seems overwhelming:

"I feel, my dear Kimberley, that you may be very fairly inclined to blame me for not having foreseen what violent opposition our proposed amendment of the present law would excite, and I freely admit that any Government which makes a mistake of this kind cannot altogether be acquitted of blame. At the same time, it is due to myself that I should point out that the question was first brought officially under our notice by Sir Ashley Eden, who expressed his opinion that 'the time has now arrived when the Native members of the Covenanted Civil Services should be relieved, etc. . . . or when *at least* [the italics are mine] Native

<sup>1</sup> April 6, 1883. In another letter to Ripon (March 29) Halifax writes of "the English outsiders."

Covenanted Civilians who have obtained the position of District Magistrate or Sessions Judge should have entrusted to them full powers over all classes, etc.' You know something of Eden by this time, and you have doubtless found out that there is nothing sentimental about him, and nothing particularly liberal in spite of the name he bears. He was for five years Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal ; he knew the Province intimately ; he was specially well acquainted with the feelings of the Indigo planters and other Europeans in the Mofussil ; and he left India amid the plaudits of the men who are now our bitterest opponents. There is not, as you will observe, the slightest hint in the official letter which I have just quoted that the measure which he was recommending would meet any kind of opposition, and he never gave me either privately or officially any reason to suppose that it would. As you know, when we got Eden's letter we sent it round to the other Local Governments to obtain their opinion upon it. These opinions are before you, and, with the exception of Coorg, they are all in favour of the change proposed by Eden. It is true that the Madras Government was divided, but Mr. Carmichael's reference to Magna Charta is enough to show the extent of his historical and legal knowledge, and the whole tone of his Minute is ill calculated to give weight to the opinions expressed in it. The Bombay Government were, as I have ascertained from Fergusson, unanimous in the opinion that they expressed, and which was given at a time when that regular old Tory, Ashburner, was still a member of Council. If there exists on the face of earth a cautious man, a man who sees every possible side of every question so clearly and strongly that it is often very difficult for him to make up his mind, it is Lyall.

He passed through the Mutiny, and I have often observed how keen are his recollections of that terrible time, and yet on this matter he speaks with no uncertain voice, and recommends almost exactly the arrangements which have been ultimately adopted in our Bill. In Assam, where there are so many tea planters, Mr. Elliott, who has had two years of experience of the Province, says distinctly: 'The Chief Commissioner does not think that this slight progress in the direction of equality is likely to excite any serious opposition on the part of the European Community. The feeling which ten years ago it would have encountered is, he believes, gradually dying out; and the experience which is being acquired of the efficiency with which Native officers administer justice is by degrees undermining it.' Sir Charles Aitchison, with his accustomed boldness, went further than the heads of any other Local Governments, and struck right at the heart of the matter, proposing a more extensive measure than we finally recommended to the Secretary of State; and Mr. Bernard in Burma, where there is an extensive European community, gave an unqualified approval to Eden's proposals."

Ripon goes on to say that Sir Steuart Bayley, who was a member of his Council and knew Bengal intimately, "said to me yesterday very frankly and generously: 'I feel that you have a just right to complain of me, that with my special knowledge of Bengal I did not warn you of the strong feelings which a proposal of this kind would excite. I knew that it would be disliked by many persons, but I had no idea that there would be any serious or general opposition to it.'"

". . . Sir S. Bayley supported it, and the evidence which I had before me went to show that it would not



call forth any violent opposition. It is true that Gen. Wilson disliked the measure, but it was not one upon which any special weight attached to his opinion. Sir D. Stewart doubted upon a matter of detail, but he has accepted the Bill as we have brought it in without any demur. Hope concurred in 'the expediency of conferring power over European British subjects upon Native civilians of any class when they have attained the rank of officiating magistrate or Sessions Judge,' but he objected to go farther; this objection again related to a matter of detail. . . . Neither Hope nor Wilson warned us that we should raise such a storm as has burst upon us, and Sir D. Stewart distinctly tells me that he had no expectation of anything of the sort. If he had had any such anticipation, he is much too cautious a Scotchman and much too good a friend of mine not to have given me due warning."<sup>1</sup>

Ripon nevertheless felt the responsibility for the blunder most keenly. His letters home at this time all bear the same burden. "If I had known what would happen I should not have let myself in for this storm." To Northbrook he writes :<sup>2</sup>

"That serious mischief has been done I cannot doubt. To what extent I ought to blame myself I find it hard to say; that those who ought to have known the feelings of Anglo-Indians much better than I could possibly do, displayed as little foresight as I did, cannot be denied; that I did not act hastily or without advice and consultation, it is true. But still, the fact remains that a great mistake has been made and that I, as head of the Government, must take my due share of responsibility for it."

<sup>1</sup> To Kimberley, March 4, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> March 19, 1883.

To Gladstone :<sup>1</sup>

“ I frankly confess that, if I had had reason to suppose that such an outbreak of violent feeling and of race hatred would have been excited by this bill, I should have hesitated to propose it at the present time ; the measure, tho' just in itself and required by administrative convenience, is not of sufficient importance or urgency to have made it necessary to encounter such a storm at a time when we have several other matters to deal with of greater magnitude and more general interest.”

And again to Kimberley :<sup>2</sup>

“ I am not sure I should have moved in the matter just now, had I supposed that Englishmen in India had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing since the days when they threatened to drown Macaulay in the Hoogly.”

The tale of Ripon's woes in connexion with the Ilbert Bill does not end with the extraordinary unanimity of official nescience in India to which he fell victim, and of which he gives a full recital in his letter to Kimberley of March 4, 1883, quoted above. To that letter, however, he added a paragraph in which he pointed out that the experts of the India Office at home had given him as little guidance as his advisers on the spot, and were apparently just as purblind. In view of what had really happened, the passage possesses a singular interest.

“ You will know whether it [i.e. the Bill] met with any opposition at the I.O. All I can say is that Hartington never told me that any opposition had been raised to

<sup>1</sup> March 24, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> February 26, 1883.

it there, and I am certain that if any important Members of this Council had told him that the proposal of such a measure would be likely to stir up all the passions which have been in fact aroused, he would either have advised me to drop the matter or would at least have given some hint of the fears which have been expressed to him. He never did anything of the kind, and therefore I imagine that the Members of the India Council were gifted with no more foresight than the local Governments in India or the Members of my Council."

As a matter of fact, a very definite warning had been formulated by Sir Henry Maine, perhaps the most eminent member of the India Office Council at that time, and the Secretary of State had actually been asked to communicate it privately to Ripon. Unfortunately, through some accident, it never left the India Office, and thus Ripon's last chance of being set right was denied him.

Maine's Minute was precisely the sort of opinion which would have impressed Ripon, both on account of its prudent temper and the high authority of its author. It expressed a decided preference for Hope's more cautious plan, and proposed that Ripon should be privately warned of the "seriousness of an European explosion," and should be advised to consult European non-official opinion on the subject—"say the Advocate-General and the European members of the Legislative Council."<sup>1</sup> Whether Maine meant that the Secretary of State should delay his official reply until Ripon had thus had an opportunity of reconsidering his position is not clear. If he did, this would have been a perfectly defensible proceeding.

In any case it is practically certain that, if Ripon had received Maine's note, he would have taken the precautionary measures suggested, for he never refused a

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IV.

compromise, and at that time he was particularly anxious to avoid further polemics during the remaining period of his rule. Had he placed Hope's modified plan before the responsible representatives of unofficial opinion, he would have had no difficulty in showing them that the measure was not an attempt to "put the native on the Gaddi," but a measure of administrative convenience rendered necessary by the mere course of events, and innocent of any far-reaching intentions. For it must be remembered that the difference between Hope's plan and the Government of India's draft lay in this—that the latter granted to Local Governments powers to extend the jurisdiction over Europeans to an *indefinite* number of first-class native magistrates, whereas Hope's plan could only apply to a defined class of Indians of considerable seniority, and few in number.

How came it that Maine's important Minute was never sent to India? The question was investigated as soon as Ripon's letter of March 4 reached Kimberley. Probably, at the instance of the mystified Council, Kimberley applied to Hartington for an explanation, and he, much bored at finding that his mind was a blank on the subject, set his Private Secretary, Reginald Brett—now Lord Esher—to hunt up the facts. Brett made a laborious summary of all the documents and their recorded adventures, tracing the missing Minute to the Committee which prepared the despatch approving the Bill, but he was unable, and probably unwilling, to carry the story further.<sup>1</sup> He said nothing in his report about the understanding between the Council and Hartington, and Hartington's failure to carry it out.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, these facts were also ascertained, but every effort was made—most improperly, it must be confessed—to hush them up, and especially

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IV.

<sup>2</sup> Hartington's own explanation is said to have been that he put the Minute in his pocket at the Council meeting, changed his coat when he got home, and forgot all about it.

to conceal them from Ripon. Five months later, however, owing to a quarrel between the Council and Hartington, the story reached Ripon. "I understand," he writes to Kimberley,<sup>1</sup> "that Sir H. Maine sent Hartington a Memorandum for transmission to me; but I never received it." Kimberley's reply<sup>2</sup> supplies the sequel to Brett's report :

"Hartington's speech at Accrington arose from the dissatisfaction which was expressed in the Council here, during the discussion of the Despatch to you on the 'Ilbert' bill of Nov. 8th, at Hartington's speech in the House of Commons, which the Council thought laid too much of the responsibility on them. They said that in assenting to the Despatch approving your proposals, they did so in the expectation that Hartington would convey to you privately the substance of a Memorandum by Maine, in which, while assenting to your proposed alteration of the law,<sup>3</sup> he pointed out that on former occasions measures of this nature had excited great dissatisfaction among the Anglo-Indian community. Hartington unfortunately forgot to write this to you, and the Council consider that this omission on his part should have prevented him from using such pointed language as to the responsibility for the Bill. At their request I conveyed this to Hartington. Hence his speech. . . . I told the Councillors that, if they really wished to convey a warning to you, they should have done so officially, and that private letters could not be appealed to as lessening official responsibility; but their annoyance was perhaps not unnatural."

<sup>1</sup> September 6, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> December 6, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> This is not quite correct, for Maine expressed a preference for Hope's scheme over the Viceroy's.

The story appears to have got about, for, after the Bill had been disposed of, Evans, the non-official member of the Legislative Council, who had most ably and moderately led the Opposition, in the course of his speech in which he "buried the hatchet," made the following remarks :

"No one can deplore more than myself the bitterness of the controversy, but I hope and trust it will cease from this day. I have all along felt assured that the object which His Excellency had in view was the good of the country. I have never doubted this, though I have thought he was grievously mistaken. I have always thought that, if His Excellency had known how real and sincere and important a fact the repugnance of the European community was, he would not have introduced this Bill. I am confirmed in this view by the manner in which he has dealt with the matter since this fact has become manifest to all. I am satisfied by inference from facts which have come under my observation that, by some misfortune which I am not able to explain, the warning which ought to have been transmitted to this country from the Indian Council or from the Secretary of State for India did not arrive before the introduction of the Bill. If so, this was a grave misfortune, but it is one which no one in this country is responsible for."<sup>1</sup>

Deeply as Ripon regretted having started the Ilbert Bill, he saw the impossibility of giving it up. The Bill, unimportant in itself, stood for the central principle of liberal policy in India—the famous announcement in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 that: "It is Our will that, so far as may be, Our subjects of whatever race or creed will be freely and impartially admitted to

<sup>1</sup> Speech in Legislative Council, January 7, 1884.

offices in Our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge " ; and to have to withdraw it would have been to confess to the Indian peoples that this solemn promise could not be fulfilled. He had other reasons for standing firm. He writes to Tom Hughes :<sup>1</sup>

" My Missus is very fairly well for her. The Anglo-Indian row has done her a world of good ; she is as strong and bold as a lioness, and would soon recall me to a proper frame of mind if I were in the least inclined to waver."

Meanwhile, the Government of India had, after the adjournment of the Council from Calcutta to Simla, continued to receive the opinions of Local Governments, of High Court Judges and District Officers, and of non-official bodies. Of the Local Governments and the High Court Judges, a clear majority were in favour of continuing with the Bill, though many amendments were suggested. Of the District Officers, however, a large majority were now in favour of withdrawal. This, as Ripon saw, was not unnatural, as the District Officer came more directly into contact with the Anglo-Indian community. Of the non-official bodies, the English were, of course, all for withdrawal, and the Indian against. In Bengal, official opinion, both high and low, was almost unanimous in favour of withdrawal. Ripon, however, never had the least intention of withdrawing the Bill, and the Cabinet at home were equally determined that it should go through. Opinion in England was on the whole in Ripon's favour. Atkins's<sup>2</sup> campaign was a failure. " At his most important meeting in Edinburgh, a motion was carried unanimously against him."<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, of course, was against Ripon. Its

<sup>1</sup> July 20, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> The emissary sent to England by the opponents of the Bill.

<sup>3</sup> From Northbrook, December 13, 1883.

correspondent at Calcutta, himself a barrister, had played a large part in organizing the agitation. But *Punch* had a cartoon representing Ripon driving an elephant (India), while a party of Anglo-Indians threatened him and molested him from the howdah. It was called "The Anglo-Indian Mutiny—a bad example for the elephant." <sup>1</sup> Ripon wrote to Gladstone apologizing for the harm which the trouble might cause to the Government at home, and Gladstone replied :

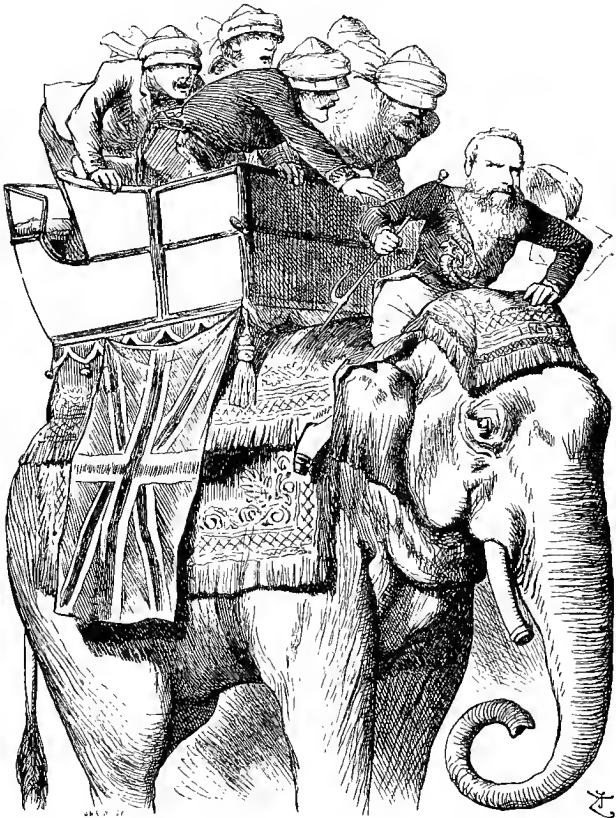
"I hasten to set you at your ease with reference to your friendly anxiety on our behalf. There was an attempt to fret and fume in the House of Commons about the Ilbert Bill, but it was short-lived and futile. . . . After reading what you very candidly say, I feel that an error may have been committed, but I am by no means sure that it has been committed. My son Harry, whose judgment is, I think, very sound, takes exactly your view. No doubt it is generally true that a Government is not only bound to act according to reason, but also is responsible for provoking unreason. Yet unreason must and ought sometimes to be heard, and the only question is, was the occasion such as to render it worth while? This I have not knowledge enough to decide. The chief point against you, in my eyes, is your own judgment." <sup>2</sup>

In August the Government of India proposed to the Secretary of State certain modifications in the Bill, the chief being that the extended powers should only be granted to sessions judges and district magistrates, and that the High Court should have power to transfer the hearing of a case from one court to another. Ripon himself had wished to adopt a proposal suggested by the Government of Bombay, giving Englishmen the

<sup>1</sup> December 15, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> April 17, 1883.





THE ANGLO-INDIAN MUTINY.

(A BAD EXAMPLE TO THE ELEPHANT.)

(By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch.")



right to claim a jury, and Sir D. Stewart had agreed with him, but the rest of the Council would not then accept it. The Bill was due to come on at the next Calcutta session of the Legislative Council, in December 1883. Its opponents pressed for its delay till it should have been considered in Parliament, and Ripon urged Kimberley to consent to this. Besides his natural conciliatory instinct, he had special reasons for wanting to allay the agitation as much as possible.

“It is our bounden duty to do all in our power consistently with the maintenance of our policy to avoid the risk of a street row in Calcutta. Such things in India can never be light matters.”<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, the European Police Force in Calcutta at the time was only between sixty and seventy strong, and, if the Europeans had insisted on a row, it might have been necessary to use European troops to quell it. Another reason for avoiding a row was the fact that an exhibition was being held at Calcutta, and the Duke of Connaught, who had been appointed to a Divisional command in India, was coming to open it. The idea of taking a vote in Parliament, however, was discountenanced by the Cabinet on the ground that it would be “handing over our responsibility as an executive to a branch of the Legislature.”<sup>2</sup>

At the first meeting of Council Ripon announced the proposed modifications; but his opponents refused to accept them. However, their leader, Evans, showed a disposition to seek a compromise, and discussions took place between him and Sir Auckland Colvin, who had succeeded Baring as Financial Member, and who had not been on the Council at the time of the introduction of the Bill. Much haggling took place. Some

<sup>1</sup> To Kimberley, October 20, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> From Gladstone, October 11, 1883.

of Ripon's Council were, he complains, "completely demoralized,"<sup>1</sup> and ready to accept any compromise, whether it preserved the spirit of the Bill or no. But Sir D. Stewart, Colvin, and Ilbert showed more stiffness, and Kimberley was averse to making any concession beyond what was absolutely necessary. Indeed, when the Jury proposal, which settled the crisis, was revived by Colvin, Kimberley was distinctly chary of accepting it.<sup>2</sup>

It was this proposal—that an Englishman, tried by a magistrate or sessions judge, whether Native or European, should have the right to claim a jury—which had originally, in a modified form, been suggested by the Government of Bombay, and which Ripon had then favoured. Its rejection at that time by the other members of Council was due largely to the practical difficulties which they thought it would raise in districts where the jury system had not been established. It was now suggested by Colvin to Evans and, after some further haggling, accepted. The bargain was approved by the Council and ratified by Ripon, who thus explained his motives to Kimberley :

"The arguments for refusing any further modifications at the present stage of the business were strong ; but, on the other hand, I had to ask myself whether I should be justified in rejecting in December a proposal which I had myself made in August, if by accepting it I could really obtain security, not only against immediate active agitation, but against constant opposition to the Bill when passed, and the probability of recurring displays of race antagonism whenever an Englishman was brought up for trial by a Native Judge. The danger of prolonging the present state of tension was felt, as I have said, not only by Bayley and Gibbs,

<sup>1</sup> To Kimberley, December 17, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram to Viceroy, December 20, 1883.

who have been somewhat thrown off their balance by the storm which has been raging round them, but by Colvin and Stewart, who are of firmer fibre and cooler heads. If I had resisted the opinion of a majority of my colleagues, a further reference to you would have been necessary, as in that case you only could have decided the matter, the question at issue being clearly of too doubtful a character to justify me in overruling my Council. On the whole, then, I came to the conclusion that I ought to accept their opinion, coinciding with that which I had myself formerly held, and allow the proposed arrangement to be carried through. . . .<sup>1</sup>

. . . I do not deny, however, that the great weakness of the Government for dealing with a European disturbance weighed with me as it did with my colleagues. I had no idea till I came to Calcutta that the European Police force at the disposal of the Bengal Government was so very small (between 60 and 70 men all told) ; in any riot, the least serious, we should have had at once to call out the troops, and I felt, and feel still, that to employ European soldiers against Europeans in this country would have been a step of the gravest kind. Whether there was any real chance of disturbance must remain a matter of conjecture ; but I am more inclined now than I ever was at the time to think that the danger was anything but imaginary, and certainly Harry Gladstone is of that opinion, and he has good means of judging. I still hold, as I have held from the beginning, that a vote of the House of Commons in favour of the bill would have settled the question as nothing else would. I could, I think, have kept the majority of the Council together upon the basis of an opportunity for such a vote, but when you decided

<sup>1</sup> December 22, 1883.

against that course they began to look about for another way out of the difficulty. The way of escape on which they finally determined was one which I had formerly proposed, and to which therefore I could raise no objection on principle ; and to have rejected it when pressed upon me by five of my seven colleagues, and with no one but Ilbert and Hope to back me, on the sole ground that *no* attempt at a pacific settlement of the dispute ought to be made, would surely have been a course neither justifiable nor even possible. It is doubtless unfortunate for me that these facts cannot be fully explained in Parliament, but that is a difficulty to which one is constantly exposed in public life, and one can only accept the position quietly.”<sup>1</sup>

The actual terms of the agreement, which, for no apparent reason, came to be known as “ The Concordat,” are given in the following extract from Ripon’s speech in Legislative Council, on January 7, 1884 :

“ The Government undertook—

To agree in Select Committee on the basis of the modifications approved in the Secretary of State’s despatch to the right being given to European British subjects, when brought for trial before a District Magistrate or Sessions Judge, to claim trial by jury such as is provided for by Section 451 of the Criminal Procedure Code, subject to the following conditions :

(1) No distinction to be made between European and Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges.

(2) Powers of District Magistrates under Section 446 of the Code to be extended to imprisonment for six months or fine of two thousand rupees.

There was in this undertaking no sacrifice whatever

<sup>1</sup> January 20, 1884.

of the principle of the Bill. It distinctly lays down as a condition of the acceptance by the Government of such a proposal in Select Committee, and the extended right to a jury trial, that no distinction should be made between European and Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges. Both under the arrangement will be placed in all respects on the same footing. All judicial disqualifications of Native Magistrates and Judges of those grades will be removed. Europeans will be liable to appear equally in their Courts, and will be dealt with by them precisely in the same manner. The principle of the Bill will thus be entirely maintained. This arrangement also gives no sanction to the theory to which I have already referred, that an Englishman possesses everywhere an inalienable right to be tried only before a magistrate of his own race, a right which, as my honourable friend Mr. Ilbert explained in his speech, is not recognized in other dominions of the British Crown—in Ceylon or in China, for instance—and which no Government, since the passing of the Act of 1833, which distinctly contravenes any such claim, has ever been known to admit. But it was an arrangement which, as it seems to me, ought to be satisfactory to Englishmen in India, for it gives them in all serious cases a judicial security to which they are accustomed at home, which is peculiarly English in its character, and upon which they have been brought up to set a very high value."

The great point about this compromise from the point of view of the Government was, as Ripon says, that it abolished all distinction between natives and Europeans of the grade of district magistrate and sessions judge, though this did not apply to the lower

grades for whom the old rule remained in force, that no magistrate could try an Englishman unless he was himself an European British subject and a J.P. On the other hand, the practical effect of the measure was, as Ripon pointed out, not likely to be great :

“It must be remembered, in the first place, that the amendment, while it takes nothing away from the Natives, gives to the Europeans in jury districts little or nothing which they do not now possess. As summary cases will in practice be disposed of by Justices of the Peace<sup>1</sup> below the rank of District Magistrates, and as the cases which will be dealt with by District Magistrates will generally be those which will fall within the category of the more extended powers with which they are to be invested—cases which at the present time go to the Sessions Judge—the Europeans will, in the great majority of cases in jury districts, obtain no novel right to a jury trial at all. Practically, therefore, in these districts this arrangement will leave things very much as they are, so far as regards the question of right to trial by jury, though the arrangements under which that trial will be conducted may be of a somewhat different character from the present arrangements. In non-jury districts the amendment will, no doubt, at present introduce a distinction, but the distinction is one which, as we all know, can be removed without fresh legislation in any district, and at any time if the Local Government should think it fit to do so by extending the general jury system.”

Some Indians and Radicals at home, fixing on this avowal, were inclined to think that they had been betrayed, especially as the Calcutta papers published

<sup>1</sup> Who must still be Europeans.



an inaccurate account of the "Concordat" which made it appear a more complete victory for the opponents of the Bill than it actually was.<sup>1</sup> Also, although the equality of British and Native judges had been vindicated, the disparity between British and Native offenders remained, as the former might demand a jury and the latter might not. But, generally speaking, educated native opinion was satisfied,<sup>2</sup> and as time wore on it came even to recognize in the Ilbert Bill an historic effort to do full justice to India.

Ripon spoke a noble epilogue to the whole story in the peroration to his speech in the Legislative Council :

"The Honourable Mr. Thomas, in a speech in which he did his utmost to stir up the bitterness of a controversy which was approaching a settlement and to fan again the dying embers of race animosity, has asked, Was there ever a nation which retained her supremacy by the righteousness of her laws? I have read in a book, the authority of which the Honourable Mr. Thomas will admit, that 'righteousness exalteth a nation,' and my study of history has led me to the conclusion that it is not by the force of her armies or by the might of her soldiery that a great empire is permanently maintained, but that it is by the righteousness of her laws and by her respect for the principles of justice. To believe otherwise appears to me to assume that there is not a God in heaven who rules over the affairs of men, and who can punish injustice and iniquity in nations as surely as in the individuals of whom they are composed. It is against doctrines like this that I desire to protest, and it is against principles of this description that the gracious Proclamation of the

<sup>1</sup> Ripon to Ilbert, December 22, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Hume to Ripon, December 25, 1883.

Queen was directed. So long, then, as I hold the office which I now fill, I shall conduct the administration of this country in strict accordance with the policy which has been enjoined upon me by my Queen and by Parliament. Guided by this policy, it has been the duty of the Government to refuse with firmness what could not be given without an abandonment of principle. But we have not allowed anything which has passed in the heat of this prolonged controversy to deter us from seeking up to the last moment for a solution of the question at issue which could be honourably accepted by ourselves and by our opponents alike. In doing so, we have, I believe, better consulted the real advantage of all races and classes in the country than if we had rested the reform we are now about to make upon the insecure foundation of a mere exercise of power.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> January 7, 1884. The whole speech is given in vol. ii, pp. 94-125 of *Ripon's Speeches in India*.

## CHAPTER XXI

### END OF THE VICEROYALTY

(1884)

WITH the settlement of the Ilbert Bill controversy, Ripon's work in India was done, except in so far as certain minor measures initiated by him had still to be carried through. The most important of these, as has been seen,<sup>1</sup> had to be left to his successor, and it was with every confidence in Dufferin that Ripon abandoned them to him. "I have long had a hope," he writes to the new Viceroy, "that when the time came for me to leave India you might succeed me, and it is very pleasant to find my cherished anticipations about to be realized."<sup>2</sup> By the same mail he expresses his satisfaction to Northbrook.

The date of Ripon's departure was determined by considerations of political convenience at home. His Viceroyalty had still six months to run, but it was desirable that the appointment of his successor should not be made by a Government *in extremis*, and it was possible that a dissolution might take place at the end of 1884. So it was determined to appoint Dufferin in August, and that he should relieve Ripon in December.<sup>3</sup> Ripon was not sorry to retire.

"The work has been telling upon me for some time, and, as is always the case when that begins to occur, I feel the strain more and more from month to month;

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 89, 115, chiefly the Bengal and Oude Tenancy Bill.

<sup>2</sup> To Dufferin, August 14, 1884.

<sup>3</sup> From Kimberley, July 30, 1884.

again, it will not be altogether a disagreeable change to escape from the unceasing torrent of lying abuse which is poured upon me continually by the Anglo-Indian Press." <sup>1</sup>

It is true that he would have preferred to stay on till March to see the Bengal Rent Bill through—any longer delay would have condemned Dufferin to come out in the hot weather—but there is no suggestion that his term of office was curtailed because of the unpopularity which he had aroused among the Anglo-Indians.

That unpopularity was, indeed, completely eclipsed by the affection with which he had inspired the whole native community, and by the service he had thus rendered in strengthening Indian confidence in British rule. In spite of his limitations in the domain of pure statesmanship, in spite, too, of his essentially British character and his few natural points of contact with the Oriental temperament, Indians of all races and creeds divined the honesty of purpose with which he had sought their good and the dignity of India on the lines of the legitimate aspirations of the Indian peoples. The struggle over the Ilbert Bill gave the finishing intensive touch to this growing appreciation. On the occasion of his departure from India it manifested itself in scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm. His homeward journey from Calcutta to Bombay was one triumphal progress, in which Indian gratitude expressed itself with touching and tumultuous unanimity and sincerity. The scene which occurred when he left Calcutta is historic. Sir William Hunter thus sketches it in a letter to his daughter : <sup>2</sup>

“For six miles the road was lined with natives in their holiday attire. Triumphal arches were placed at fre-

<sup>1</sup> To Northbrook, September 12, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> December 16, 1884.

quent intervals and the whole was brilliantly illuminated, every house and tree ablaze with lamps. There was one long-continued cheer as the Viceroy was driven at a gallop, with his bodyguard riding as fast as the horses could carry them."

Sir C. Aitchison, in a letter to Primrose, gives a striking illustration of the depth of Indian feeling for Ripon and of its imperialist value :

"Rajah Sir Sahib Dyal (Lord Lawrence's old friend and right-hand man) came to me one day and said : ' The natives have much confidence in Lord Ripon, and so love him that he is worth regiments of soldiers. I have watched the advance of the great Northern Power ever since Rangit Sing's time. . . . The crisis will not come in my day, for I am now a very old man, but come it will ; and when it does come send for Lord Ripon. He will do more for you than regiments of soldiers, and our women will sell their jewels and lay them at his feet.' "

Not all the manifestations were native. Even some of the most violent Anglo-Indians softened at the last moment. Ripon relates this story to Kimberley :<sup>1</sup>

"A pleasant incident took place last night at Arrah, where we stopped to dine. The Behar Light Horse Volunteers (a corps composed almost exclusively of planters), hearing that we were to make a halt at that station, asked to be allowed to send a deputation to say good-bye to me. The Commanding Officer and three other officers came in the most civil and friendly manner (the Commanding Officer from over 100 miles

<sup>1</sup> November 28, 1884.

distance by road). They dined with us, and we parted on the most amicable terms. They were among the fiercest opponents of the Ilbert Bill last winter. Indeed, when I first received their proposal I was puzzled to make out what it meant. It was, however, evidently intended as a proof that they nourished no resentment."

On the other hand he writes to Northbrook :<sup>1</sup>

"I have been overwhelmed with addresses since I left Simla, and the task of replying to them has been in many ways difficult. . . . I do not think that I have said anything calculated to give offence to anyone ; but I could not honestly speak well of the principles or proceedings of my unscrupulous opponents of last year, or of the lamentable weakness which marked the conduct of the Civil Service as a body."

How solidly this popularity was deserved, and how permanent and beneficent was its influence on British policy in India, are shown in a strikingly practical way by the testimony of his successor. Dufferin had only been a few days in Calcutta when he realized the vital necessity of making it clear that he had come out to continue Ripon's policy. He writes to Halifax in January 1885 :

"Nothing would have been more fatal than if a suspicion had gone abroad amongst the natives that I was disposed to abandon in any particular the friendly attitude he [Ripon] had so courageously maintained towards them. I sincerely trust that when he reaches England he will obtain the credit he deserves. No Viceroy has laboured so conscientiously or so uninter-

<sup>1</sup> November 28, 1884.

ruptedly for the good of the millions entrusted to his care. . . . I have already announced my intention of fostering to the utmost of my power the beneficent projects he instituted for the good of the people ; and I shall be quite content if I can leave the country under the same honourable conditions which attended his departure."

Eighteen months later he writes to Ripon himself :

" In all my private letters, whether addressed to your political opponents or to your friends, I have invariably borne the most earnest and warm testimony to the ability, the industry, the conscientiousness, and the noble and lofty spirit which characterized your control of affairs, as was evinced by every paper of yours that came under my eye. The only criticism that has ever occurred to me in reference to your proceedings has been that in rendering yourself so popular with the natives you have made the position a little difficult for your successor." <sup>1</sup>

Even when his own Viceroyalty was coming to an end, Dufferin did not tire of proclaiming from the housetops his fidelity to the Ripon tradition. This was the burden of a speech he made in the Calcutta Town Hall on March 23, 1888, and in sending a copy of it to Ripon he writes that " much of what I am getting credit for is the fruit of seed sown by you." <sup>2</sup> Tom Hughes, in London, had a prophetic vision of the further fruition of this seed :

" What a three years you have had of it ! but what a blessing to have had them, and endured, and come

<sup>1</sup> Lyall: *Life of Dufferin*, vol. ii, pp. 75-6.

<sup>2</sup> April 10, 1888.

through! I can say from the bottom of my heart with you, thank God, and sing 'Nunc dimittis.' If one wanted (which I don't) another proof of how He is guiding this blundering old world, no more convincing one could have been given. If you had been sent out 10 years earlier I think you would have failed, both because India would not have been ready for you or you for India. For in those years I doubt if you would have been able to face the supreme test of setting your face like a flint and going quietly and steadily, and without any attempt at retort against the whirlwind of abuse and insolence of the Anglo-Indian community, and certainly the native community would neither have been able to appreciate you or to take advantage of your policy. As it is I am sanguine that the worst crisis is over, that God means India to be redeemed yet by England, and that we may see it yet a self-governing country and an integral and satisfied branch of the Empire of the future."<sup>1</sup>

The following is a selection from the letters written by Ripon's colleagues and subordinates when his retirement was announced:

*From Sir A. Colvin*

*Sept. 12, 1884.*

. . . I cannot let time pass without venturing to express to you my regret at your leaving India a day sooner than was necessary. I am aware that I am in the minority in expressing this feeling (so far as Englishmen are concerned); but I should like to be allowed to express once more on this occasion my deepest and strongest and most sincere sympathy with those great principles of justice, humanity, and right dealing which

<sup>1</sup> January 17, 1885.



through all report you have, to the honour of all Englishmen, upheld in this country. Whatever men (and still more lamentably women) may say now, I am profoundly convinced that no man in authority will ever dare, or be able if he did dare, to go again behind the powerful protest against the evil "Nigger" tradition which has been the note of your administration. As long as I remain in this Council, I shall endeavour to keep alight the flame which you have kindled in the spirit which has animated you; not only because my feeling for the people among whom I have lived so long makes any other spirit impossible to me, but because I know that unless we can shake off the evil genius of insolent authority, we shall assuredly be ourselves shaken off. . . . I hope that in the cry of welcome which will greet Lord Dufferin, you will remember that there are men in the country, some of them happily highly placed, who follow you with the highest admiration and in the most unqualified respect, and who will make it their business, so long as they have opportunity, to promote the interests which have lost their most powerful champion in you, and to walk in the right way which you have set before them.

*From Sir C. Bernard, Chief Commissioner of Burma*

*Oct. 24, 1884.*

. . . As this may be nearly the last time that I shall write to Your Lordship, I wish to express my gratitude for your unfailing kindness to myself. You have been a good master to me, and you have given me your confidence. . . . I believe that when angry feelings have passed away, very much that Your Lordship has done and said as Viceroy will be remembered, and will

influence for good the future of India and the conduct of India's English rulers.

*From C. Elliot, Chief Commissioner of Assam*

Nov. 26, 1884.

I have received much kindness from you personally, and much support and help in my attempts to benefit the Province over which you placed me, and also I feel that your departure is a greater loss to India than to myself. I trust, however, that I shall continue to lay to heart the lesson which no Viceroy has so emphatically taught as Your Lordship, viz. that we must cease to attempt to govern this country as a Bureaucracy and to treat the natives with a kindly disdain ; but must seriously set to work to associate them with ourselves, and to make them feel that England wishes to govern India not only for India but through India. I believe that after-generations will look back to this Viceroyalty as the time when this principle ceased to be an academic phrase, and began to be deliberately put in practice.

*From Sir S. Bayley*

Dec. 15, 1884.

I had wished before you left, for an opportunity of saying a few personal words of farewell to you, but in the infinity of your engagements I did not like to ask you to give me a portion of the time which you could so ill spare. Now that you have leisure in view I have less hesitation in occupying a few of your moments.

I only wish to assure you that I recognize very fully how much I have to be personally grateful to your Lordship for, and that I have throughout sympathized much more thoroughly with your general line of native policy than, I think, you were aware of. The one

episode that has cast an unpleasant shadow over our relations was the part I took in rendering a compromise necessary on the Criminal Procedure Bill. I am as convinced now as I was then, that only by some such course could we prevent race hostility expressing itself in action and so perpetuating itself, but the correctness of this view must of course be a matter of conjecture, and I only allude to the subject now to say that I recognized then, and have always since felt, what a tremendous sacrifice we called on your Lordship to make, and that apart from the momentary irritation of the controversy I have always thoroughly appreciated the high sense of duty that enabled you to make it. The fact that I should have taken part in forcing this sacrifice on you has always been a source of pain, and in some sense of shame, to me ; I can only ask you to believe that I then felt, and still feel, it to have been an imperative necessity, and, looking back now, I beg to assure you of my entire admiration of the manner in which you accepted it.

In regard to your general native policy, though on some points I see now where the way of putting it forward might have been improved, and susceptibilities might have been soothed with advantage, I feel sure that you have guided the policy of Govt. into the right channels, and from those channels there is no chance of its going back. The controversies of your reign have forced the Govt. to recognize the strength of the new element growing up in native political life, and the question of the future is not how to ignore or suppress it, but how to adapt ourselves to and enlighten it and make good use of it. In wishing you now a happy return home, and a peaceful future unvext by the obstruction of self-willed councillors, I can only ask you

to forgive me for any vexation I may have caused you, or for any needless addition I may have made to your troubles.

*From Sir Frederick Roberts (Lord Roberts)*

HEAD QUARTERS, MADRAS ARMY, 6th December 1884.

MY DEAR LORD RIPON,—I should not like you to leave India without my letting you know how much I have felt your kindness to me since I came under your Lordship's notice in August 1880.

I am well aware that I owe my present position in Madras, and the G.C.B., to the special recommendations made by your Lordship in my favour after the battle of Kandahar, and that the troops who marched from Kabul to Kandahar would never have been given the bronze star they value so much but for the kind interest you took in them.

I am much obliged for these and subsequent marks of appreciation, and I should not have allowed all this time to pass without telling your Lordship so had I not thought that it would be unbecoming of me to address you on any personal matter so long as you were holding the Viceroyship of India.

Lady Roberts joins with me in wishing Lady Ripon and yourself goodbye and hoping that you will have a pleasant voyage home.

I remain, dear Lord Ripon, yours very truly,

FRED ROBERTS.

Ripon's Viceroyalty may justly be described as epoch-making in the history of India. It is true that in recent years events have moved with a speed not anticipated in his day. Nevertheless the reforms he effected are remarkable, quite apart from the spirit which animated them, for no other Governor-General, from Dalhousie to Curzon, accomplished so much in

this field and went so far. And he accomplished it in spite of the fact that he suffered from constant and sometimes bitter obstruction from the Council at the India Office, while the Bureaucracy in India was, to say the least, not biassed in favour of his radical tendencies.

It is true that the times were in his favour. Reforms in many directions were ripe. During Lytton's administration they had perforce been held over owing to the war and famine which preoccupied that period, and in the peaceful and prosperous years that followed it was inevitable that they should come up for disposal. Moreover, the political revulsion of 1880 at home was bound to have some effect on the Indian atmosphere. Men of liberal views, like Alfred Lyall and Charles Aitchison, came more readily to the fore. The spread, too, of education in India had reached a point when its results had to be reckoned with, and this was shown by the fact that by far the most important step taken for the admission of Indians to the higher branch of the Civil Service had already been forced on Lytton himself when he created the Statutory Civil Service. It shows how much reform was in the air that, of all the important questions with which Ripon dealt as Viceroy, there was only one—that of education—which he personally initiated. All the rest came before him for disposal in the ordinary course of business.<sup>1</sup> Thus, under any Liberal Viceroy the years 1880 to 1884 would have been years of busy reform. But few men could have packed so much into them as did Ripon, or could have packed it so well.

But Ripon was not only a reformer ; he was a worker on the scale of his great task. On a perusal of his correspondence one cannot help being struck by his phenomenal industry. He writes to Kimberley early in his Viceroyalty : “ I have never had in my life such a continuous strain of heavy and important work, but

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on the Principal Measures in the Home Dept.*, p. 207.

it is very interesting, and, what is a great relief and advantage, very varied." <sup>1</sup> By the same mail he writes five letters home, besides his weekly letter to Hartington. When Baring fell ill in 1882 he took on his work in addition to his own. "I am trying to ape Gladstone and be Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer in one," he writes to Halifax.<sup>2</sup> As regards his weekly letters to Hartington, he writes to Kimberley when the latter became Indian Secretary :

"Hartington, I fear, suffered greatly under the length of my epistles. De Grey, who has come out here to pay us a visit, tells me that he was one day in a railway carriage with Hartington, who suddenly drew forth from his pocket a 'small volume,' and said with a deep and despairing sigh: 'De Grey, what do you think this is? It is one of your father's letters.' The story has touched me greatly, and I have at once registered a vow not to torment the new Secretary of State as much as I tormented the old one, so I will begin without delay to put my intended reform into execution." <sup>3</sup>

By the next mail, however, he writes to Kimberley a letter extending over nine pages of quarto print and ending with a postscript.

"The Earl of Kimberley, having read this letter, fell back into his chair exhausted, and then, jumping up, stamped his foot, and exclaimed, 'Confound that fellow Ripon! He promised me in one of his last letters that he would not treat me as badly as he treated Hartington, and here, on the first opportunity, he has outdone his former self.'" <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> May 7, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> January 13, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> February 11, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> January 20, 1883.

It was all the more unpardonable to treat Kimberley in this way, as Kimberley used to read Ripon's letters.

But, though inclined to be prolix in his intimate correspondence, Ripon was eminently businesslike. It is this quality which Durand, in his life of Sir A. Lyall, specially singles out for praise in the Viceroy. The two most momentous decisions which he had to make during his Viceroyalty were when he let Roberts march to the relief of Kandahar and when he accepted the "Concordat" proposals on the Ilbert Bill. Both were made in circumstances of extreme gravity and urgency, and both were amply justified by events.<sup>1</sup>

A second great gift of Ripon which appreciably smoothed his difficult path in India was his power of making friends. It is true that the "Ilbert Bill" controversy dealt a blow to his popularity with the European population from which he never recovered, but, before that, there is ample evidence that he was generally liked, even among those who opposed his policy. Hartington's testimony on this head has already been quoted. To it may be added the testimony of Aberdare :

"And now, my dear old friend, let me tell you with what intense pleasure I hear your praises sounded from all quarters . . . Plowden . . . writes to express the contentment of the civilians, and to contrast the courteous, speedy, and careful consideration he and his brethren receive, with the delays, the barely civil treatment, and the offhand perfunctory attention experienced from your predecessor. Another, a clever young artillery man . . . wrote from Candahar that, although the army generally, and he himself strongly,

<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Ilbert Bill it was essential that the decision should be reached before a projected mass meeting of the opponents of the Bill was held, otherwise compromise would have become impossible. (Telegram to Secretary of State, December 17, 1883.)

are opposed to the withdrawal from Afghanistan, every officer gives you the highest credit for care for the interests of the army, for your justice and personal kindness."

Though this general popularity failed to survive the Ilbert Bill, Ripon retained unimpaired to the end the warm friendship of almost every one of the colleagues with whom he was brought into close contact. It is remarkable that, save in the matter of the evacuation of Kandahar—a matter on which agreement was, as Ripon recognized, quite out of the question—he never once overruled the majority of his Council. He even complained sometimes that he found them too ready to comply with his wishes. It was with the authorities at home (especially the Council at the India Office) that all his real conflicts were waged. His good relations with the members of his own Council are shown by his constant interchange with them of little notes, couched in intimate terms and abounding in small jokes and often rather mysterious catchwords. It was his habit to take a walk regularly in the afternoon—though he says that his predecessor had tried to foster the idea that it was *infra dig.* for a Viceroy to walk—and on these occasions he would often ask a member of Council, usually Baring, to accompany him with a view to discussing some particular question of the hour. He cemented his friendship with Sir D. Stewart on a shooting expedition.

Nor was this pleasant intercourse confined to the big-wigs in his immediate entourage. He made a point of keeping up a constant correspondence with the heads of the various provincial administrations and the agents in the native states. His correspondence includes much interesting information of a quite non-official kind from political agents and chief commissioners touring in the wilder parts of the Empire. The letters



of farewell he received from many of these subordinate officials when he left India show how much the administration had gained by the personal loyalty with which his industry and kindness had thus inspired them.

Lastly, Ripon's success was largely due to his being a man of that easily misunderstood type, a fanatic of moderate views, who would fight for a compromise as others fight for a creed. He never aimed too high for practical effect, and it is surprising how rarely he failed to achieve his aim. His most titanic fights with the reactionary Council of the Secretary of State were seldom on matters of high principle. Almost the bitterest of all turned on the question of the gauge of a railway. On the two greatest controversial questions of his time—the Frontier question and the Ilbert Bill—it was the Home Government which stood out for immediate and extreme measures, while Ripon fought hard for compromise in the first case and for delay in the second.

That Ripon was quite capable of withstanding Progressive opinion when it took an irrational and sentimental form has already been seen. It was perhaps best shown in his speech on the Assam Emigration Bill. This Bill, which was based on the proposals of a Committee appointed to consider the best means of encouraging the migration of labour to the tea gardens of Assam, was chiefly a re-enactment of a previous measure, and the alterations which it contained were, on the whole, to the advantage of the emigrant. Nevertheless, the British India Association opposed it on the ground that it would reduce the coolie to the position of a slave to his employer. Referring to this charge, Ripon said, in his speech in Council: "I do not think there is the slightest necessity for me to take any notice of what our American cousins would call the 'tall talk' which has gone on about this Bill."

When, however, all is said, Ripon's Viceroyalty will

always be memorable, not so much for any particular measure, as for the extraordinary hold which he acquired on the affection of the Indian population, and the loyal hopes with which he thus filled their political horizon. The consistency with which he kept their interests in view is shown not only by the great measures which are dealt with in the foregoing chapters, but in scores of smaller manifestations of delicate regard for their feelings and grievances—his measures to alleviate the aggravations inflicted on the Indian community by the unpopular, though necessary, Arms Act ; his efforts to get the age of admission to the Indian Civil Service raised in order that Indians might have a fair chance of competing ; his selection of an Indian judge to act as Chief Justice of Calcutta in the absence of Sir R. Garth. And these are only a few instances. Indians swiftly recognized the personal element in all this unwearying solicitude on their behalf. As Sir Erskine Perry says in a letter to him :

“ I am sure you are making a great impression on the Native mind ; they have discovered your possession of what you have in so large a measure, *Dil*, and there is nothing Natives appreciate more.”

*Dil* means “ heart.”

BOOK V  
*THE ELDER STATESMAN*







LORD RIPON IN THE GARDEN AT STUDLEY  
*(From a photograph by Viscount Harcourt.)*

## CHAPTER XXII

### HOME RULE AND A NAVAL INTERLUDE

(1885—1892)

THE stormy career of the second Gladstone Administration was moving with accelerated momentum to its final catastrophe when Ripon set foot again in England on January 23, 1885. To a bewildering complex of external embarrassments—the Transvaal, Egypt, the Soudan, and, more perplexing than all, Ireland—was now added a crisis in the long-smouldering conflict of Whig and Radical within the Cabinet. Friends in England had kept Ripon pretty well informed of all that was going on behind the scenes. Algernon West sent Lady Ripon budgets of gossip as useful as they were charming. Brett, still private secretary to Hartington, afforded the Viceroy occasional glimpses of the working of the Whig Holy of Holies, while Dilke sent every Friday a pithy little summary of Cabinet secrets.<sup>1</sup> Some of the most decisive events, however, happened during Ripon's journey home. Among them were the passing of the new Reform Act—including Ripon's pet aversion, the extension of the County Franchise—and Chamberlain's promulgation at Ipswich of his "Unauthorized Programme," which was virtually a declaration of war on his Whig colleagues. A few weeks later the dread question of Home Rule began to take embryonic shape within the Cabinet. In February Chamberlain, with the approval of Parnell and the support of Gladstone,

<sup>1</sup> There are sixty-four of Dilke's letters. They begin on May 14, 1880, but they were not continued beyond February 23, 1883. There was a break in them in the first half of 1881, when both Dilke and Ripon were ill.

drafted his scheme of National Councils for Ireland, and in May the Cabinet threw it out by a narrow majority.<sup>1</sup> This momentous decision was destined to give a scope and intensity to the faction fight within the Liberal Party which shipwrecked all stable politics in the United Kingdom for more than a generation.

The qualities shown by Ripon in his conciliation of India, together with his record as a Liberal of the more cautious school, persuaded some of his friends that he might play a great part in the strife that was impending. "I hope and believe," wrote Tom Hughes, "you have much more work to do for England yet, for which you have had such a training as those only get, I suspect, from whom big things have to come."<sup>2</sup> Manning wrote in a similar strain: "And now we need you at home more than you are needed in India, for we are in much confusion, and men are striving to lead who will undo Christian England if they come to power."<sup>3</sup> For a moment there was a risk that Ripon might not return to English home politics at all. The appointment of Dufferin to succeed him at Calcutta had vacated the Constantinople Embassy, which at that moment was peculiarly important, and Granville urged his nomination to the post on the grounds that "his pro-Mahomedan policy ought to have a good effect, and he is a very persistent man—with wealth." Whether the offer would have tempted Ripon is difficult to say, but Gladstone saved him the trouble of deciding by declaring himself "for various reasons" against it.<sup>4</sup>

Ripon spent the first few months of 1885 in exploring the situation and determining on the precise faction to which he would attach himself. He received little assistance in the shape of the confidences of his old

<sup>1</sup> Gwynn: *Life of Dilke*, vol. ii, p. 129. Morley: *Gladstone*, vol. iii, pp. 193-4.

<sup>2</sup> February 18, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> January 25, 1885.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzmaurice: *Granville*, vol. ii, pp. 364-5.



Cabinet colleagues. To Gladstone, and still more to Chamberlain, the Whig taint was still strong upon him, while Hartington ranked him as an out-and-out Gladstonian. When, some time in April, he made up his mind, the decision was not quite in the vein of Hughes's and Manning's anticipations. We have the first glimpse of it in a letter of Chamberlain to Mrs. Mark Pattison : <sup>1</sup>

“I was dining last Saturday with Lord Ripon, who professed to be well pleased . . . and declared his full adhesion to the new gospel ; but the majority of his class and school are getting thoroughly frightened, and will probably quicken and intensify the movement by setting themselves against it, instead of trying to guide and direct it.” <sup>2</sup>

Chamberlain was wrong so far as Ripon was concerned. He had definitely decided for the “ unauthorized programme,” and later on, when the general election was impending, he explained the process by which he had reached this decision.

*To Lord Wenlock*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 25 Oct. 1885.

MY DEAR WENLOCK,—I am very sorry to find from your letter of yesterday's that you feel a difficulty in attending the Liberal meeting at York on Wednesday next in consequence of the views expressed in some of Mr. Chamberlain's recent speeches. I cannot say that they have troubled me, but I am probably more of a Radical than you are. I hesitated some time before I declared myself in favour of Household Suffrage in Counties, but when I did so it was with a full conviction

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lady Dilke.

<sup>2</sup> Gwynn : *Dilke*, vol. ii, p. 137.

that its adoption would lead to extensive changes in the nature of some of those which Mr. Chamberlain has proposed, and with a willingness to accept them which seemed to me a necessary consequence of the recent measures of Parliamentary reform. When I speak of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals I speak of them as I understand and believe them to be, not as they are misrepresented by Tory declaimers.

It must, however, be borne in mind that all that the party is bound to is the measures sketched out in Mr. Gladstone's manifesto as those to be immediately dealt with. Beyond that everyone is free.

For my own part I am afraid that if Chamberlain were "the devil" which Sir F. Milner professes to think him, I should prefer him to a reckless and unprincipled mountebank like Randolph Churchill. . . .

Yours sincerely, RIFON.

The wrathful reference to Randolph Churchill in the above letter takes us back to an incident which happened two months previously. On June 8 the Government had been defeated on the Budget through the defection of the Irish vote, and Gladstone had resigned. After much hesitation, Salisbury had formed an Administration to wind up the business of Parliament before the General Election. In this "Cabinet of Caretakers," as Chamberlain dubbed it,<sup>1</sup> the Indian Secretaryship had been given to Randolph Churchill. His chief qualification for the office was apparently that he had spent the preceding winter tiger-shooting in the Himalayas. Nevertheless, he had kept his eyes open to the political situation, and he returned to England a convinced, and even enthusiastic, Riponite :

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Holloway on June 17, 1885.

*From Sir Henry James*<sup>1</sup>

*Thursday, April 9th, 1885.*

MY DEAR LADY RIPON,—It may interest you to hear that I have had this afternoon a long talk with Randolph Churchill on Indian affairs. He has come home in a very enthusiastic state of mind in respect of Lord Ripon's Governor-Generalship. He says that the very favorable condition of affairs in relation to the native attitude towards Russia is to be traced entirely to Lord Ripon's treatment of the natives; and that the difficulty of the task of treating them considerately was much enhanced by Lytton's previous policy.

All this, I fancy, will on suitable occasion be said in public, possibly coupled with a statement that the Europeans were not treated with quite so much consideration as the natives. I thought the views of this noble Lord might amuse, perhaps even interest you.

Believe me, dear Lady Ripon, yours most truly,

HENRY JAMES.

As will appear presently, Churchill spoke in the same sense to others, but this did not prevent him from delivering a venomous attack on Ripon and the whole range of his activities—or, rather, alleged inactivities—when the time came for him to make his statement on the Indian Budget in the House of Commons (August 6). The attack was as obviously dishonest as it was laboured, and it created widespread pain and astonishment. As Baring pointed out afterwards in a letter to Ripon,<sup>2</sup> he made allegations against the Liberal Viceroyalty in regard to finance and Russian policy which the public were unable to check, but which he himself must have well known had long ago been disposed of by unpublished dispatches in the India Office archives. What

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord James of Hereford.

<sup>2</sup> August 11, 1885.

instructed Indian opinion thought of the speech is shown by the following letters :

*From the Earl of Northbrook*

4 HAMILTON PLACE, PICCADILLY, Aug. 7/85.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I happened to be in Town last night, and heard at Brooks' of R. Churchill's attack on you, so I went down to the House to hear what people said. Whitbread, who has a cool head, thinks that it was so palpably a party attack that it was not worth much, and best answered by the remark that R. C.'s special function is to attack Viceroy.

Cross<sup>1</sup> and Hartington seem to me to have done very well, especially as they had no notice.

I went to Hartington this morning and had a good talk over the business. We are decidedly of opinion that you had better make your ans<sup>r</sup> at some meeting in the country. H<sup>n</sup> said Harcourt thought the same, and so does Cross. Indeed, the latter suggested Bolton, where he would promise you a good meeting.

The *Standard*, Hartington says, has given the correct report of what R. C. said of your policy towards the natives. I have marked the passage to save you trouble. You know in this R. C. was hardly honest, for since his return from India he has praised your policy in that respect.

In haste, yours affly., NORTHBROOK.

*From Sir Henry Cotton, K.C.S.I.<sup>2</sup>*

45 ST. JOHN'S WOOD PARK, LONDON, N.W., March 7th, 1885.

MY DEAR LORD RIPON, . . . Lord Randolph Churchill appears to be extraordinarily unscrupulous. I was

<sup>1</sup> J. K. Cross, Under-Secretary for India in the second Gladstone Administration.

<sup>2</sup> Distinguished Indian official, successively Chief Secretary to the Indian Government, Home Secretary and Chief Commissioner of Assam,

breakfasting this morning with Wilfred Blunt, and he assured me that Lord Randolph gives out everywhere that he is entirely in accord with your Indian policy, and that in fact no other policy is possible. And yet he devotes his budget to an attack on your finance administration and to the laudation of Lord Lytton, without one word from which it might be supposed that he was in sympathy with you in anything. His attack on you will damage him with the natives of India, who were prepared to look favorably on him. Lord Hartington seems to have spoken out well enough, but I wish Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright had been in the House.

I am, yours respectfully and sincerely,

H. J. S. COTTON.

Ripon followed Northbrook's advice and made his reply at Bolton on August 23. It proved a triumphant vindication. Northbrook was loud in his praises of it. "It seems to me," he writes, "to answer every point of R. Churchill's attack completely."<sup>1</sup> Kimberley, who also wrote with knowledge, was even more emphatic: "Your speech was, I think, in every way, judicious as well as calm and dignified in tone. However ignorant R. Churchill's effusions may be he is so important a personage that whatever he says or does requires careful attention, and I am very glad you exposed his blunders and misrepresentations."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, like Gladstone, but without consultation with him, Ripon was quietly feeling his way towards Home Rule. It was probably part and parcel of his adhesion to the "Left Wing" under Chamberlain, who was generally reputed to be entirely on the side of the Irish Nationalists. As a matter of fact, Chamberlain had no idea of going beyond his National Councils

<sup>1</sup> September 1, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

scheme, and drew a sharp distinction between it and Home Rule.<sup>1</sup> But this was not Ripon's only reason. He could not but be impressed by the fact that under the new Reform Act the Parnellites would probably hold the balance of parties in the House of Commons, and this practical consideration was reinforced by the quickened sympathies with self-government which he had brought back from India and by a certain sense of religious kinship with the Irish people.

It was not, however, until July 1885 that he began to make up his mind. An old Irish friend who had shared his revolutionary enthusiasm in the early fifties, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, had returned to England after a highly respectable political career in Australia. Duffy had been an Irish intransigent in the most combative days of O'Connell, had afterwards joined the more extreme "Young Ireland" party, and had been tried for treason-felony in 1848. His early extremism had been cooled by the responsibilities of office at the Antipodes, but his devotion to Irish freedom had not abated, and now, in his seventieth year, he had come home with the hope of devising a Home Rule régime which would be equally acceptable to England and Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Of his old Radical friend, who, like himself, had been sobered by time and experience, he had high hopes.

*From Sir Charles Gavan Duffy*

120 EBURY STREET, July 11th, 1885.

DEAR LORD RIPON,—I have come to England to use the providential opportunity which has offered itself to push, if I can, the Irish cause to some practical success. I have seen various public men, and it is not improbable, I believe, that the first Session of the

<sup>1</sup> Gwynn : *Dilke*, vol. ii, pp. 199-201.

<sup>2</sup> For Duffy's early life and his career in Australia up to 1875, see his *My Life in Two Hemispheres* (London, 1898).

new Parliament may see another political revolution. Nothing can, to my thinking, be more reasonable, just, and judicious on the part of a British statesman than to pacify Ireland by granting her demand for self-government. I would have been delighted to see you at the head of such a movement. But the time is to act. If it depended on me I would support a Conservative Govt. which conceded self-government in preference to a Cabinet of the twelve Apostles who refused it. We have waited long enough. The population of Ireland has diminished every year for forty years. Your success in India, the success of self-government in the great Colonies, preach the same lesson, that justice is the highest wisdom.

If you consider my hopes vain, or my aim unwise, I have no right or desire to occupy an hour of your leisure—for in truth no other purpose interests me at all. I am going to Ireland in a few days to learn how far moderate counsel will prevail there.

Believe me, dear Lord Ripon, very faithfully yours,  
C. GAVAN DUFFY.

Ripon's response was encouraging, though not without an element of caution :

*To Sir Charles Gavan Duffy*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 12. 8. 85.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,—Your last letter did not give me as much hope as I should have wished that you would be able to pay me a visit here before you return to Italy ; but I nevertheless return to the charge, as it would be a great pleasure to me to see you and to discuss Irish questions with you.

I do not think that you find among English public

men any one more inclined than myself to take a sympathetic view of Irish requirements and Irish difficulties. That, as you will remember, was always my disposition, and now that I am bound to the Irish people by the ties of a common faith it has, I need not say, become much stronger.

It is, of course, possible that you will find men who will *profess* more than myself, and I dare say that that may be so at the present moment, but professions made to catch votes at a Gen. Election are not worth much afterwards. In such a situation a real discussion with you would be of very great advantage to me, and might not, I venture to think, be useless for the promotion of the great interests to which you are devoted. If, therefore, you should be able to come here you would meet with a warm welcome, both from the recollection of the days when we were together in the House of Commons <sup>1</sup> and from our common desire to deal wisely and justly with the difficulties of the present time.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

Duffy closed eagerly with this chance, as he expressed it, "of inducing you to take the Irish question in hand," and a fortnight later he was at Studley unfolding his plans.<sup>2</sup> They were remarkably moderate in comparison with the proposals afterwards embodied in the successive Home Rule Bills. One suspects at first that Duffy, despairing of any more influential champion of Home Rule, had especially adapted his scheme to Ripon's Whig reputation and to the vital necessity of conciliating English opinion in regard to the protection of minorities. But in point of fact this was not the case. He had really become as Whig as Ripon himself, and he had persuaded

<sup>1</sup> Both Ripon and Duffy took their seats for the first time in 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Duffy, August 14, 1885, with Ripon's endorsement.



himself in the course of his personal investigations in Ireland that his views were widely shared within as well as without the ranks of the Nationalist Party. Even after the General Election in December had sent Parnell back to Westminster with a solid following of eighty-six Home Rulers, Duffy expressed the opinion that it was "the greatest mistake to suppose that there is no force of National opinion in Ireland except the supporters of Mr. Parnell. There is a substantial force of moderate, well-informed, conscientious opinion, which will make itself effectually felt in an Irish Parliament, which does not desire separation, any more than English Liberals desire a Republic."

He added :

"If Providence sends you to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant to open an Irish Parliament, the experiment will be as successful as it has been in Africa, America, and Australia."<sup>1</sup>

In principle, Duffy's plan was not unlike that of the first Home Rule Bill. It provided for two Houses of Parliament—a Senate to consist, in the first place, of thirty-two of "the best men in the country" nominated for life, and afterwards of members elected by local bodies, eight for each province; and an Assembly to consist of 102 members, elected by thirty-four three-cornered constituencies, with provision for minority representation. Certain questions affecting religion and property were to be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Irish legislature.<sup>2</sup> When Ripon was at Dalmeny during the election he discussed this scheme with Gladstone, and afterwards sent him a copy of it.<sup>3</sup> But the time for half-measures was rapidly ebbing away,

<sup>1</sup> January 18, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Gladstone, January 20, 1886.

and eventually it was found that the Irish appetite could scarcely be appeased with a far larger scheme.

The general election of 1885 seemed to place Parnell in the position of Dictator of the Imperial Parliament, and to make a solution of the Irish question by way of Home Rule imperative. Between the 333 Liberals and 251 Conservatives who had been elected 86 Irish Nationalists held the balance beyond dispute. Hence, Parliament was faced by the choice between its own paralysis and the virtual repeal of the Union. Every effort to find another alternative failed, and early in the new year the Government resolved to ride for a fall by preparing a new Coercion Bill. On January 26 they were defeated on the Address, and two days later the Cabinet resigned. Gladstone thereupon formed a new Government, the members of which pledged themselves, not to a final policy of Home Rule, but to an inquiry as to the practicability of the establishment of an Irish Legislature which would be "just to each of the three Kingdoms, equitable with reference to every class of the people of Ireland and calculated to support and consolidate the unity of the Empire on the continued basis of Imperial authority and mutual attachment."<sup>1</sup> On this footing Chamberlain accepted office, though Hartington and the more extreme Whigs abstained, and a Cabinet including Spencer, Harcourt, Rosebery, Granville, Kimberley, Ripon, and John Morley was formed. The Prime Minister could not act on Duffy's happy suggestion that Ripon should be sent to Dublin as Lord Lieutenant, as the Act of George IV excluding Roman Catholics from the office was still in force.<sup>2</sup> The Department allocated to him was that of the Admiralty. His qualifications for it were, perhaps, not

<sup>1</sup> Morley: *Gladstone*, vol. iii, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> Gladstone sought to repeal this exclusion by the Religious Disabilities Removals Bill of 1891, but it was not accorded a second reading. Besides the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland this Bill proposed to open the Lord Chancellorship to all British subjects without distinction of religious belief.

very obvious, but in view of the all-absorbing and critical task of the new Cabinet, the distribution of portfolios was relatively an unimportant matter.

In the dramatic six months' story of Gladstone's Third Administration Ripon did not play a conspicuous part, but it was eminently useful all the same. He rallied loyally to his Chief when, in March, the Home Rule plan was revealed to the Cabinet, and the Liberal split was made definitive by the resignation of Chamberlain and Trevelyan and the heavy defection of Bright. From that moment he became one of the closest allies of John Morley, who was Chief Secretary, and, according to the gossips, the "ghost" of the Prime Minister in the construction of his Irish policy.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that Morley's Whiggism, as Sir Sidney Low once ingeniously diagnosed it, awoke an instinctive affinity between the two men. They appeared together for the first time at the meeting of the London and Counties Liberal Union on March 2, when Ripon seized the opportunity of publicly pledging himself to the coming Bill and commending it to the Liberal Party.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, this new friendship—or rather what it implied—almost cost Ripon the vestiges of an old one. Tom Hughes, now settled in Chester as a County Court Judge, had, from the first, taken an uncompromising stand against the Irish Nationalists, and had watched with growing apprehension Ripon's approximation to the policy he detested. On Twelfth Night, 1886, he spent some sad hours rummaging among the letters of old friends and lamenting, as he wrote to Ripon, his growing "estrangements" from the few that remained. When Ripon finally took his stand with Gladstone and Morley, Hughes wrote to him :

"I called on you in town last week, but for the first

<sup>1</sup> "The story is, of course, pure moonshine" (Morley: *Gladstone*, vol. iii, p. 296). Morley was created Viscount Morley of Blackburn in 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 3, 1886.

time in my life was glad to find that you had left town and that I could not see you. I cannot get to understand or sympathise in the remotest degree with this Irish policy. It seems to me as if the devil had succeeded in tempting Gladstone on his weakest side, and that he has been able to cast a glamour over the mass of Liberals which may, or rather which must, bring us into fearful difficulties." <sup>1</sup>

Ripon mildly expostulated, and Hughes retorted :

"As to Ireland, I should be glad if I could go with you, but, apart from all other considerations, the shame of deserting the scattered loyalists all over Ireland and leaving them to the tender mercies, not even of Parnell & Co., who will soon be shoved aside, but of the Invincibles, makes me fairly turn side, and feel with the Lord of Buttrays in the Spanish Ballads—

‘How could I stand midst gentlemen such  
Sworn on my grey head.’

However, I didn't mean to open the subject, which is a painful one. We must all go on and work in the crisis according to our lights, as I know you will do." <sup>2</sup>

But the difference, added to the religious difference, was a sore trial to Hughes, and two years later it flared up into almost an open quarrel. Ripon had agreed to address a public meeting in the Co-operative Hall at Dewsbury on the Irish question, when a Co-operative Congress was sitting in the town. Hughes protested intemperately to Ripon, and threatened to appear at the meeting and publicly oppose him.<sup>3</sup> Ripon's reply was characteristic :

<sup>1</sup> Easter Monday, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> May 1, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> May 7 and 8, 1888.

*To Thomas Hughes*

1 CARLTON GARDENS, S.W., 9 May, '88.

MY DEAR TOM,—I have received your two letters of the 7th and 8th. You are a bad diplomatist, and the needlessly aggravating tone in which you write tempted me grievously to go on with my meeting and see you farther first. But it is no use being angry with an old friend, and so I have got my friends in Dewsbury to postpone the meeting till a day in June which will suit them much better. They were always opposed to Whit-Monday and only took it at my request. This will put me to great personal inconvenience and impose upon me much needless labour, but it is better than a row.

Yrs., &amp;c., R.

Hughes was readily melted by this soft answer. "Let me ask your pardon," he wrote, "frankly and humbly, for the needlessly aggravating tone of my two letters. God knows it was perfectly unintentional."<sup>1</sup>

Ripon's main usefulness in the short-lived Cabinet of 1886 lay in his own Department of the Admiralty. There was urgent need for courageous and vigilant work here, and all his old interest in national defence was reawakened when he thus came face to face with the serious problem presented by the state of the Navy. A long period of somnolence and stagnation had come to an abrupt end in the winter of 1884, as the result of a series of startling articles published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, under the title "The Truth about the Navy. By one who knows the facts."<sup>2</sup> They were written by the Editor, William T. Stead,<sup>3</sup> from information

<sup>1</sup> May 10, 1888.<sup>2</sup> September 15 et seq.<sup>3</sup> "The most powerful journalist in the island," as Lord Morley has called him (*Recollections*, vol. i, p. 169). He succeeded Morley as Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and afterwards started and edited the *Review of Reviews*. He perished in the collision between the giant liner *Titanic* and an iceberg on the Atlantic Ocean.

supplied by a number of brilliant young Naval officers, chief among them the late Lord Fisher, then Captain Fisher, commanding the Excellent Gunnery School Ships at Portsmouth. Northbrook, who was then First Lord, had not been quite so somnolent as these ardent spirits imagined, but he hated what he called the game of "Beggar my neighbour" with France, and he was paralysed by the rapid advances in Naval shipbuilding, which rendered it difficult to decide on large-construction programmes based on types of vessels which might rapidly become obsolete. As late as August 1884 he had said in the House of Lords that "so far from any large increase [of expenditure] being necessary, he was of opinion that if any such large increase were made he would have some difficulty in knowing how to dispose of it."<sup>1</sup> This over-caution was obviously dangerous in view of the audacity of French Naval policy, and when the *Pall Mall Gazette* scare awoke the nation to its peril the Government seized the opportunity of Northbrook's absence in Egypt to announce a Naval programme, the first of its kind, involving a supplementary outlay of £3,000,000. Northbrook had scarcely time to do more than glance at the problem presented to him by this programme when the Government resigned in June 1885. His successor, Lord George Hamilton, held office for only seven months, during which he also was unable to achieve anything substantial in the way of increased construction, but he left behind him, not merely an acceptance of the programme of 1884, but an unauthorized enlargement of it by six ships of various types, together with plans for a still further programme of small craft—sixteen vessels—costing about £1,000,000. Even then the annual Budget of the Navy was only a trifle over £12,000,000.

This was the situation Ripon found when he took over the Admiralty on February 6, 1886. He had

<sup>1</sup> Mallett: *Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook: A Memoir*, p. 200. For a full defence of Northbrook's Naval policy see pp. 199-217.

sympathized strongly with Stead's campaign, and he was gratified to find that his predecessor had so fully identified himself with the deathbed repentance of the previous Liberal Cabinet. There was a chance now of a really national Naval policy on which both parties might be agreed. Unfortunately, this was not the view of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Vernon Harcourt. He was intent on drastic economies, and, before the Government was a week old, he notified the Secretaries for War and the Navy with some peremptoriness, that they would be expected to bring in considerably reduced Estimates.

Ripon did not allow himself to be intimidated.

*To Sir W. V. Harcourt*

ADMIRALTY, S.W., Feb'y. 11th, 1886.

MY DEAR HARCOURT,—It is a mistake to begin firing your big guns at the commencement of an action. I shall reserve mine for closer quarters.

You do not at present know what sort of Estimates I am about to bring forward or what are the requirements or liabilities of the Admiralty. You shall have the rough sketch as soon as possible, but if you wish me to reduce the Estimates as much as I can I must have time to go through them carefully.

Yours sinc<sup>ly</sup>, RIPON.

Not very much time was required to convince the new First Lord of the danger of complying with the demands of the Chancellor. Even while his investigations were being made a striking object-lesson was afforded him of the defects of the Navy. Trouble between the Great Powers and Greece had been brewing for some months, and in February it was resolved to compel the Hellenic Kingdom to abandon its insolent

and provocative policy by means of a blockade.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose an imposing international Armada was assembled in Cretan waters. At the last moment Admiral Lord John Hay, who was in supreme command, discovered that he had very few torpedo-boats and no torpedo-catchers, and that only the British vessels were equipped with nets, the protective value of which was by no means certain.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the Greeks had twelve torpedo-boats of the latest pattern, which had been built for them at Stettin and Kiel and brought out to Salamis by German officers only a few weeks before.<sup>3</sup> What was to be done? At the time of the Russian crisis in 1884 our whole torpedo flotilla numbered only eight vessels, and of these only two were capable of keeping the sea.<sup>4</sup> Since then a large number had been ordered, but very few had been completed. There was also a great deficiency of torpedoes. After much trouble Ripon managed to send out two more boats, and the Austrian Government was persuaded to send three more.<sup>5</sup> Even then the danger of a close blockade caused much anxiety, but the secret was well kept. The Ministers of the Great Powers bravely presented their ultimatum and hauled down their flags, and then, to the great relief of the British Commander, the Hellenic Government made its submission.

With risks such as these before him Ripon had no alternative but to disregard the excessive frugality of the Exchequer, and his Estimates, when completed, proved something of a shock to the apostles of retrenchment in the Cabinet. The idea of these gentlemen had

<sup>1</sup> *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. lxxvii, pp. 642, 682. Choublier: *La Question d'Orient depuis le Traité de Berlin*, pp. 292-309. Rumbold: *Final Recollections*, pp. 75-95.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Ripon, February 26, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Rumbold, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-80.

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard*, vol. cccvi, pp. 1859-60.

<sup>5</sup> Ripon to Duke of Edinburgh, March 16, 1886; and to Lord Rosebery, April 2, 1886.



been that as the "panic scare" of 1884 had died away, and as, in view of other public preoccupations, it was not likely to be revived, there was no longer any need to carry out the whole of the Northbrook programme. What was their astonishment when they found that Ripon not only adhered to that programme but also to its unauthorized extension by his immediate predecessor, including the plans for a further programme of small craft. There were also proposals for increased expenditure on guns, ammunition, and torpedoes. Gladstone modestly described the struggle in the Cabinet as a "stiff conclave." The truth is that it reached the point of threatened resignations on both sides. But Ripon, as Granville had said, was "a very persistent man," and although at first he was only supported by three of the new members of the Cabinet, he made so good a fight that in the end he got his way with no more than the loss of the new credit for small craft, and that was only postponed.<sup>1</sup> The final result was that the road for the progressive expansion of the Navy on a really adequate scale was kept open, and instead of reducing his Estimates Ripon had the satisfaction not only of saving the whole of the Northbrook-Hamilton Programme, but of obtaining sanction to an increase in the amount of normal expenditure. Indeed, in presenting the Estimates to the House of Commons (March 18), Hibbert, the Secretary to the Admiralty, was able to boast that they were the highest that had been submitted to Parliament since the Crimean War.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 11, 1886. The authenticity of this account is shown by an angry letter of Harcourt to Ripon. "I have read," he writes, "the article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* by 'One behind the scenes.' The writer is well entitled so to style himself, for he is evidently instructed not only in the secrets of the Admiralty, but what is more serious, of the *Cabinet*. If there had been a shorthand writer present he could hardly have given more accurate details. This article could only have been written by some one in the Admiralty or posted up from there" (March 11, 1886).

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, vol. ccciii, pp. 1184 et seq. Sir John Hibbert had been previously Secretary to the Local Government Board and Under-Secretary for the Home Department. He served as Secretary to the Treasury, 1892-5.

Outside a small knot of Pacifists, Ripon's achievement was hailed with marked satisfaction by the public and the Press. His Estimates did not satisfy all the hopes of the Service and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but in view of the difficulties with which he had had to contend they were accepted as a promise of much greater things. Stead congratulated the country on having at last "a strong man" at the head of the Admiralty.<sup>1</sup> These anticipations were not ill-founded; Ripon worked at his task in his usual painstaking way, and soon obtained a mastery of it which earned for him the respect and affection of all his professional subordinates. From the veteran Lord Alcester down to John Fisher, then on the threshold of his reforming career, the expressions of confidence in him were unanimous. Unfortunately, he was not destined to fulfil these expectations, for in August the Government came to an end, with the rejection of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, and he quitted office with his colleagues. It was reserved for Hamilton in 1889 to carry out on a vastly enlarged scale the ideas which Ripon had so well defended.<sup>2</sup> Whether he would have acted precisely in the same way had he been afforded the opportunity is difficult to say, but, at any rate, he contributed very materially to his successor's achievement by his success in maintaining the continuity of Naval expansion, and in rescuing the policy once and for all from the arena of party politics.

The rejection of the Home Rule Bill not only overthrew the Government but brought disaster upon the whole Liberal Party. It was due, in the first place, to the secession of 93 Whig and Radical Unionists under Hartington and Chamberlain, and, in the second place, to the endorsement of their action by the country at the General Election held in July. From this appeal the Liberals returned to the House of Commons only

<sup>1</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 11, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> The Naval Defence Act, 1889. See Ripon's speech to the Wheelwrights' Company (*Times*, April 14, 1886).

192 strong, while the Dissentients numbered 76, the Conservatives 316, and the Irish Home Rulers 86. This gave a net majority to the Unionists of 114. Salisbury thereupon took office with the prospect of a long tenure. No one among the Liberal leaders was less dismayed by the blow which had fallen on the Party than Ripon. Buoyed up by an intense confidence in the righteousness of the Home Rule cause, and, consequently, in the inevitability of its early triumph, he threw himself into the task of converting the country with a zeal and pugnacity scarcely equalled in his Christian Socialist days. While most of his colleagues were still dazed by the disaster and some were inclined to angry recrimination, he devoted himself to cheering his Irish friends :

*To Sir C. Gavan Duffy*

1 CARLTON GARDENS, S.W., July 31, '86.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,—I have been meaning to write to you for some time, but have been prevented by pressure of business. Now that I have practically laid down my office <sup>1</sup> I am more free to do so. I hope that you are not discouraged by our defeat. It is to be regretted, no doubt, for it tends to diminish the grace of the concession wh. will ultimately be made, but under any circumstances the final triumph of the principle for wh. we have been contending cannot long be delayed. My greatest fear is that the occurrence of outrages in Ireland or of conduct on the part of Irish members in the Ho. of C. calculated to cause resentment in this country, shd. be used by the new Govt. as an excuse for a coercive policy. It is evident that they do not wish to show their hand at present, and I have no doubt that one of their motives is that they may be

<sup>1</sup> The Seals were not transferred until August 3, 1886.

able to take the chance of the existence of such a state of things in Ireland as will enable them to appeal to the passions of Englishmen to support them in the adoption of a violent policy. I am very well aware of the difficulties of the Irish Party, and know that they have rocks on every hand of them. But when one looks calmly at the results obtained in the last ten months, they are really wonderful, and it wd. be only playing the game of the enemies of Irish freedom to do anything calculated to alienate English feeling.

I should much like to hear your views of the situation and of the policy to be pursued. Are you likely to come to Eng<sup>d</sup> this autumn? If you do I hope you will come and see me again. I can now talk much more freely than I c<sup>d</sup> last year.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

Ripon's "greatest fear" soon became a reality, in the shape both of seditious impatience in Ireland and of coercion in St. Stephen's. But this did not deter him from his sanguine efforts. Before the end of the year he had appeared on Liberal platforms in London, Brigg, Ripon, Paisley, Whitby, New Cross, and Birmingham, with rousing messages to the broken and resentful Home Rule ranks. "You are very gallant," wrote Gladstone, "in taking so large a share of work."<sup>1</sup> The ex-Prime Minister feared, indeed, that his lieutenant's energy might jeopardize the lingering chances of Liberal Reunion. But Ripon saw clearly that the differences which had arisen in the Party were differences of principle, and that reunion was impossible without a capitulation on one side or the other, which might leave the Irish question worse off than ever. He modified his overt zeal, but, at the same time, watched closely and suspiciously the Round Table Conference

<sup>1</sup> December 9, 1886.

between Chamberlain and Trevelyan on the one side and Morley, Harcourt, and Herschell<sup>1</sup> on the other, which opened in January 1887. He writes to Morley on the 17th :

“ I hope you are holding firm in your conferences with Chamberlain and Trevelyan ; we must not ‘ climb down,’ as the Yankees say. Liberal reunion is a very good thing, but adherence to principle is much better. I have complete confidence in you, but I cannot say so much for your colleagues. I propose to go to London next week.”

Again, on February 7 :

“ I hope that in your negotiations with Chamberlain you bear in mind that it is not impossible, in attempting to heal one breach, to produce another. To my mind the essence of the position is that we must carry the Irish representatives along with us in anything that we may agree to. We need not refuse concessions to Chamberlain which they are willing to accept. But it would be impossible for us, consistently with the principles which we have steadily laid down, to attempt to ‘ settle ’ the Irish question without the concurrence of the Irish Leaders. Personally, I should care very little if the round table were, as Illingworth said, to be ‘ put up for sale.’ I should be glad to see Liberal reunion if it can be got without a sacrifice of the Irish cause, though I have no great desire to see the Party once more inundated with the cold stream of Whig country gentlemen. But it would be both foolish and wrong to abandon any portion of our essential principle

<sup>1</sup> Herschell had been Lord Chancellor in the Liberal Administration of 1886.

in order to snatch a hasty junction with men who have forfeited the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the party in the country.

We can afford to wait ; they cannot. I would give them much in matters of form ; nothing in matters of principle."

Morley, who had high hopes of the Conference, and, indeed, thought at the time that he had practically captured Chamberlain, adjured Ripon to have no fear. Chamberlain had, in fact, already contemplated important concessions, especially in regard to a scheme of Home Rule based on the Canadian Federal precedent. " I don't think we should have screwed him up to this point," wrote Morley, " without the temptation of the Round Table. *We* are exactly where we were. He will carry off not a single scrap of substance from us." <sup>1</sup> This exultation was a little premature. A few days later Chamberlain slipped through Morley's fingers, carrying with him all his contemplated concessions, and the Round Table collapsed.<sup>2</sup>

During the whole of the remaining five years of Salisbury's Government—with but one interval, due to illness—Ripon's activity, chiefly on the platform but also in the House of Lords, was little short of prodigious.<sup>3</sup> He realized all the moral virtue of a forlorn hope. When in July 1888 the Duke of Argyll gave notice of a vote of confidence in the Irish policy of the Government, he was all for dividing against it, although he knew that the handful of Home Rulers in the Lords would be badly beaten. Kimberley remonstrated with him on

<sup>1</sup> February 7, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the Round Table see Morley: *Gladstone*, vol. iii, pp. 364-8, and *Recollections*, vol. i, p. 310 ; Holland, *Duke of Devonshire*, vol. ii, pp. 184 et seq. ; Elliot, *Goschen*, vol. ii, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> In 1887 he addressed meetings at Harrogate, Birmingham, Haggerston, Grimsby, Skipton, Spalding, Newcastle, Sheffield, Warrington, and Southport. The other years were on the same scale.

his Yorkshire robustness. "You are terribly pugnacious," he wrote. "In this depressing town atmosphere we are but feeble creatures."<sup>1</sup> When *The Times* published the Pigott forgeries and Parnell had to defend himself before the Special Commission his indignation knew no bounds. He was foremost in pressing the members of the late Government to subscribe to the Defence Fund, and when both Gladstone and Morley cautiously advised him to wait and see he sent a donation in the name of his wife.<sup>2</sup> But the most valuable of all his propagandist efforts at this period was a remarkable embassy to Ireland, in the company of John Morley, which he undertook on behalf of the Liberal Party.

In November 1887 Goschen and Hartington had visited Dublin as the central figures in a lifeless but otherwise skilfully stage-managed manifestation of Irish Unionist opinion, designed to persuade feeble-minded folk that all the responsible and sober elements in the island were on the side of the Castle and Coercion. It was not easy to organize a counterblast, owing to the disordered state of the country and the difficulty of controlling it by voluntary effort. When Gladstone was first consulted about it he was gravely doubtful of its wisdom. But the leading Irish Members, and especially John Dillon, urged that the disorders were largely due to despair, and that the best cure for them was to give the people some reason for reliance on the constitutional exertions of their friends in England. Morley was of the same opinion, and on December 3 wrote to Ripon proposing that they should take the mission in hand together.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To and from Kimberley, July 6 and 7, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> From Gladstone, August 2, 1888; from Morley, August 24; from Spencer, September 9 and 18; to Spencer, September 12 and 19; to and from Morley, November 16 and 18.

<sup>3</sup> See also letters from Morley, December 6 and 19, with Ripon's endorsements.

“ I have pretty well made up my mind [he wrote] that somebody ought to go—1st, as an answer to Goschen’s challenge ; 2nd, to put heart into the Irish people ; 3rd, to elicit a demonstration that would affect opinion in Engl<sup>d</sup>. My notion of a demonstration is an expression of opinion by address, deputation, or otherwise, from all the representatives and elective bodies all over Ireland (outside of Belfast).

Will *you* come ? ”

Ripon at once approved the idea, and agreed to join Morley on condition that Gladstone’s “ blessing ” was forthcoming. Ultimately this was obtained, and preparations for an appropriate reception for the visitors were set on foot throughout Ireland. A Reception Committee of over 3,200 representative Irishmen was quickly organized. At first there was some little hesitation in high ecclesiastical spheres on account of certain disrespectful references to Roman Catholicism which had appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* while under Morley’s editorship. But Archbishop Walsh, who was in Rome at the time, telegraphed an emphatic Absolution, and nineteen Irish Bishops forthwith joined the Committee. The visit was an enormous success—moral, political, and spectacular. The easily moved Irish heart swiftly understood the outstretched hand. In a very literal sense, Ripon and Morley were the guests of the Irish people from the moment they set foot on the quay at Kingston on February 1, and were officially welcomed by the Town Commissioners. They made the journey to Dublin by road, through dense cheering crowds and escorted by an imposing torchlight procession. The whole of Dublin turned out to welcome them, the crowds in the streets being swollen by enthusiastic pilgrims from the uttermost corners of the provinces. The ceremonial functions consisted of the presentation of the Freedom of the City of Dublin to



the visitors, the reception of some 3,000 provincial delegates bringing addresses from municipalities and other representative bodies throughout Ireland, a luncheon at the Mansion House presided over by the Lord Mayor, and a great evening reception at Leinster Hall, which in beauty and gaiety recalled something of the glories of Dublin society in the old days of the Parliament. The speeches of both Morley and Ripon were mainly devoted to stimulating public confidence in the loyalty of the Liberal Party and the fundamental generosity of the English people, and in counselling patience and constitutional methods of agitation. At the Mansion House luncheon Ripon made a particularly happy reference to the debt which English Catholics owed to O'Connell. His personal success was, indeed, very perceptible, and helped materially to enhance the political effectiveness of the Mission. There can be no doubt that for a moment it calmed Ireland, as it certainly impressed England.<sup>1</sup>

*From Earl Spencer*<sup>2</sup>

ALTHORP, NORTHAMPTON, 5 Feb. '88.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I cannot resist writing you a few lines of hearty congratulation on the great success of your Ambassage to Dublin. Not only was the Irish part admirably done, but your speeches and Morley's struck me as singularly appropriate and excellent. You said exactly what was wanted, and not a word which grated against any one's views or sensibilities.

The affair must produce a great effect and will show how beneficial on the Irish tone of feeling, etc., must be

<sup>1</sup> *Times* and *Daily News*, February 2, 3, and 4, 1888. For preliminaries of visit see *Times*, January 9, 11-17, 20, 23, 25-8, 30, and February 1.

<sup>2</sup> The most considerable of the Whig Peers who accepted Gladstone's Home Rule policy. He was twice Viceroy of Ireland and also served as President of the Council and First Lord of the Admiralty.

the alliance between them and the Liberal Party. You have done the cause a great and genuine service. You two men were exactly the right men to lead such a Mission and take this new and important step in politics. None of us others would have fitted in, I least of all : but as we get the Public to acknowledge the position of Irish Leaders, and not to treat them as outcasts and lepers, we shall be able to help even in Ireland. I am so fond of Ireland and the Irish that I followed your proceedings with lively interest ; and I never recollect being so pleased with any other Political move. I am sure you must be happy over it.

We go to London to-morrow, so we shall meet very shortly.

Yr. very ty., SPENCER.

Though all this tumultuous activity did not, as a matter of fact, get any nearer to a final settlement of the Irish question, Ripon's ardour and optimism remained unabated. He writes to Hume on June 16, 1888 :

“ My Irish work has been of peculiar interest to me, for, apart from the questions with which I had to deal in India, I have never felt so strongly about any public question as I do about the Irish question. The policy of the Government appears to me so blind, so cruel, and so hopeless that I am ready to spend myself heartily in the effort to put an end to it. But that blessed consummation is a good way off yet, I fear, though we are no doubt making steady progress in the country and recovering the ground which we lost in 1886. I believe we should win at a General Election now, but a General Election may be four years off yet.”

And yet this was far from absorbing all his energies.

In the House of Lords he worked unremittingly and with great usefulness at a wide range of more humdrum questions. He felt that he had a certain responsibility in regard to this uninspiring but very necessary branch of the national housekeeping, for, as he wrote to Hume later in the year,<sup>1</sup> the tendency of the bitter controversies on the Irish question was to supersede all other questions and to expose them to the risk of being neglected. Moreover, his competency in business of this kind was quite exceptional. He was now a Parliamentarian of forty years' standing, with a very large administrative experience both in and out of office. When to this was added the dignified position of an ex-Viceroy of India, it will be seen that he had become a sort of Elder Statesman in the Imperial councils. Indian questions made a special claim on his vigilance and solicitude. As he wrote to Morley on January 1, 1889, it was all the more necessary to watch them because nobody else had any time to attend to them, while men "like Hartington or Northbrook, who might in '85 have taken a somewhat Liberal view of Indian policy, would now adopt an opposite line." In virtue of the offices he had held he was the accredited spokesman of the Opposition on all questions relating to the Army and Navy and Public Education. He took an active part in the debates on Technical Instruction and the new Elementary Education Bill. Among other questions on which he spoke frequently and worked hard in Committee were the organization of the new County Councils and the Factories and Workshops Bill of 1891. At the same time he was more than ever busy with local work in the West Riding, of which he had been Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum since 1873, and of which he now became Chairman of the County Council.

The process of converting the electorate to Home Rule, to which Ripon so materially contributed, continued with marked success down to the winter of 1890.

<sup>1</sup> December 18, 1888.

It then received a check from which it never fully recovered in Ripon's lifetime. Parnell, the Irish leader, was cited as co-respondent in a divorce case, and a condemnatory decree was pronounced. The circumstances of the case were more than usually squalid and scandalous, and it was felt on all hands that Parnell could not remain in public life. He, however, elected to defy public opinion, and in the fight that ensued the Irish Nationalists fell a prey to an unseemly conflict and their cause in England became gravely compromised.<sup>1</sup> Ripon felt the disappointment keenly and his health suffered. Nevertheless, he took his full share in the Party councils which had to deal with the new and difficult conditions created by the Parnell scandals. His part in the readaptation of Liberal policy which was officially presented to the electorate eighteen months later is indicated in the following correspondence :

*From W. E. Gladstone*

HN., D. 29. 90.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I thank you very much for your most kind letter, though I could wish it had brought me a better account of your health. Let me, *let us*, at the opening add to these thanks the expression of the warmest good wishes for you and Lady Ripon. . . .

*Our* great object must be, while we cannot interfere in the Irish quarrel without doing more harm than good, to keep the party well together in England. There floats before my mind the idea that this may perhaps be handled by our taking up one of the articles of our programme, say "one man one vote," with the reform of registration. I am corresponding a little on this question.<sup>2</sup> How does it strike you ?

Ever sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

<sup>1</sup> The story of the Parnell scandal and tragedy is told with singular power by Morley : *Gladstone*, vol. iii, pp. 428-59.

<sup>2</sup> With Morley : *Gladstone*, vol. iii, p. 57.

*To W. E. Gladstone*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 30th Decr., 1890.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—Many thanks for your kind letter. On the question which you ask me I have first to say that I have long been inclined to the belief that it would be a wise thing if the first piece of legislation undertaken by a new Liberal Government were to be the adoption of the principle of “one man one vote,” and of a thorough reform of registration. We should, by taking this course, give ourselves time for the preparation of the details of a Home Rule Bill, and we should strengthen our position in case of an early dissolution. But if this line were to be taken two things must, I think, be borne in mind. In the first place we must do nothing to give any countenance to the idea that we have become lukewarm in the matter of Home Rule. I have no doubt that there are some people who would be very glad to see Home Rule gradually laid aside. But to move at all in that direction would be utterly inconsistent with all that we have said and done during the last four years and would be dishonouring to the Party. And then, again, it seems to me that Registration Reform is only an improvement of machinery, and that it would not form a basis sufficiently wide or attractive to be made the chief “plank” (forgive the Americanism) of an Election Platform. The working classes will, no doubt, be glad enough of a reform which will increase their power. But they will ask what is it going to lead to? What will be the result of it? It cannot therefore stand alone. It may be put forward as first in time, but not as first in importance. I hope that for the next Election we shall firmly retain Home Rule in the latter position. But if it were displaced a whole series of labour questions would

come to the front, which Registration Reform would help forward, but of which it would not take the place even temporarily. I do not think that it would call forth any enthusiasm or that it would, standing alone, have go enough about it to secure a good majority.

Yours most sincerely, RIPON.

This was the beginning of the consultations of Party Chiefs which resulted in the promulgation of the so-called Newcastle Programme on which the elections of 1892 were fought.

The outcome of those elections was a victory for Home Rule, but not one which promised any real success for the policy. Outside the Irish Nationalists the Liberals were still in a minority, and it was futile to think of bluffing the Lords with an odd trick consisting of a handful of Irish Nationalists. Ripon discussed the situation with Kimberley.

*From the Earl of Kimberley*

35 LOWNDES SQUARE, S.W., July 19/92.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I suppose you will be coming to town soon, and I shall be anxious to have a talk with you. The Tories are fairly beaten and can't stay in office, but our position is full of difficulties. I have not heard what the temper of the Irish Nationalists is. Everything really depends on this. What little has reached me in the way of rumour about the feeling in the Liberal Party tends to show that there is no enthusiasm for Home Rule, and a desire to put forward at once other measures. Of course Home Rule *must* be brought forward. Besides our position and repeated pledges, the Irish Nationalists hold us in the hollow of their hand.

But *if* the Nationalists are reasonable (a large as-

sumption), they may allow us free hand enough to enable us to do something at once to satisfy our party.

I am afraid J. Morley is in a very awkward situation. The Labour party,<sup>1</sup> I am told, is making a dead set at him. Altogether, what a kettle of fish! I see the last returns just in reduce our majority to 42. At this I conclude it will remain, as we are not likely to lose Orkney. None too many considering that nine are Parnellites, our bitter enemies in heart, and several more are disaffected Labour members.

Yours very truly, KIMBERLEY.

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, July 21/92.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,—I got y<sup>r</sup> letter yes<sup>r</sup>. I agree with all you say in it.

My information as to the feeling in the Party is the same as y<sup>r</sup>s, and I think, and have long thought, that a Registration, One man one vote, etc., Bill ought to precede a Home Rule measure. I do not think we c<sup>ld</sup> pass from Home Rule to anything else—but we must deal at the earliest moment with the rural question.

Our strength now lies in the Counties, and we must keep our hold on them. H.R. and the Rural Bill s<sup>ld</sup> be brought in, in the same session, tho' H.R. should have precedence.

Then we shall very soon have the Welsh Disestablishment people upon us. But I hope they will be reasonable enough to wait a bit—tho' it will be a short bit, I expect.

I anticipate that the Nationalists (apart from the

<sup>1</sup> At the General Election in 1892 the first attempt was made to secure direct representation of Labour in the House of Commons, and four members of the new Labour Party and six unattached members were elected.

Parnellites) will not be reasonable *at first*. If they don't stick to us they will be nowhere.

What sort of man is Blake? <sup>1</sup> Will he be a help to us?

I intended to go to London on the 1st August, as I have a County Council meeting next week, but if I could be of any use to you I would run up earlier.

If you were to "wire" to me to-morrow I could go up to town on Sat<sup>r</sup>.

Yrs. very sin<sup>r</sup>, RIPON.

The "kettle of fish" was not as bad as it seemed. Ripon's re-approximation to Kimberley—his oldest friend among the Liberal leaders—foreshadowed the lines on which the unravelling of the difficulties was ultimately effected.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Blake, Canadian statesman and lawyer, who was invited by the Irish anti-Parnellites to become Leader of the Nationalist Party and was elected for South Longford in 1892.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### PROBLEMS OF EMPIRE

(1892—1895)

WITHIN a few days of the close of the electoral battle, Gladstone was busy with the plans for his fourth Administration. One of the first of his old colleagues to be called into council was Ripon :—

*From W. E. Gladstone*

HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER, *July 23. 92.*

MY DEAR RIPON,—There are great difficulties before us with the prospect of a composite party on each side of the House. I wish I were not myself a difficulty, but there is no shutting the eyes to facts. I can give less to colleagues than heretofore and probably must ask more from them. But I can assure you that even if there be one subject of partial severance between us there is no one on the entireness of whose sympathy and support I more implicitly rely than yours. At no period has that reliance been more unequivocal than it now is. The Irish schism, and the limited nature of our majority, must in a manner tell upon the form of our proceedings. Nor have I yet learned anything about the views of the Nationalists. But I am as fast bound to Ireland as Ulysses was to his mast.

I am to be in London on Wednesday, when you go up,

and I shall be very happy to see you ; and shall hope among other things to hear well of Lady R.

Ever yours sincerely, W. E. GLADSTONE.

Ripon responded dutifully that " any help I can give you will be rendered with all my heart."<sup>1</sup> Consultations followed, but the actual work of Cabinet-making did not begin until a fortnight later. On August 14 Gladstone wrote formally to Ripon offering him the Secretaryship of State for the Colonies, and Ripon replied the same day accepting it.

During the first twelve months of the new Administration the work of the various Departments was completely overshadowed by the great struggle on the Irish Home Rule Bill, and the epic fascination lent to it by the magnificent courage and tenacity with which the Premier—then in his eighty-fourth year—fought for it to the end. Ripon, though largely absorbed by the formidable problems of his own office, worked gallantly by the side of his Chief. Owing to the impatience of the Irish Nationalists it was found impracticable to adopt the wise tactical plan proposed by him in December 1890,<sup>2</sup> though very distinct traces of it may be found in the Queen's Speech with which the Parliamentary Session was opened in January 1893. The Home Rule Bill was put forward " first in time as well as first in importance," and from February 13, when it was introduced into the Commons, until September 8, when it was thrown out by the Lords, it dominated the whole Session and absorbed the main energies of Parliament. Ripon's labours in connexion with it were not confined to the deliberations of the Cabinet. He spoke frequently at Liberal meetings in defence of the measure,<sup>3</sup> and he made an excellent fighting speech on the second

<sup>1</sup> July 24, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, December 1 and 30, 1892, January 10 and March 9, 1893.

reading in the House of Lords in reply to a ponderous harangue by the Duke of Argyll.<sup>1</sup>

After the loss of the Bill further conflicts with the House of Lords took place, and Gladstone, who was then in Biarritz, intimated to the Cabinet that in his opinion the time was ripe for a militant appeal to the country against the dictatorship of the Upper Chamber.<sup>2</sup> He received by telegraph, as he himself records, "a hopelessly adverse reply." This disappointment, added to the growing failure of his eyesight and hearing, clinched his determination to resign, and on February 2 he communicated his decision to Ripon. Realizing that this meant probably the end of Home Rule, Ripon urged him strongly to at least remain in his place until a dissolution became practicable :

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To W. E. Gladstone*

9 CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, S.W., 5. 2. 94.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,— . . . As you have alluded to Ireland, there is one consideration which I venture to bring before you. If you were to retire several months before a Dissolution took place I should be greatly afraid that Home Rule would take a second place at that Dissolution. If you stay with us till an appeal to the country is close at hand you can prevent this. You can keep the Irish question, as no one else can, before the country—your mere presence at the head of the Government secures this—but if you leave us no one will remain who can really do this—Morley cannot, Spencer cannot, none of the best Home Rulers among us can ; and my dread is that Home Rule, though spoken of approvingly when mentioned, will slowly

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, ser. iv, vol. xvii, pp. 292-300.

<sup>2</sup> Morley : *Gladstone*, vol. iii, p. 505.

but surely recede from the front, to the great delight of Harcourt and possibly some others.

Now to my mind the future of Ireland depends largely upon the position which the Irish question holds at the next General Election, and that position depends upon your influence more than upon anything else.

I feel as strongly as any man can all that you have done for Ireland. I estimate very highly the change in her position which has been effected by the passing of a Home Rule Bill thro' the House of Commons. I admit, tho' sorrowfully, that neither Ireland nor her friends can expect you to go thro' another General Election if your sight does not improve; but that till that Election is at hand you should by retaining your position keep the question of Home Rule as the first object of the Liberal Party clearly before the country, is to my mind essential for the future success of the policy to which for the last eight years your life has been given.

Forgive me if I have spoken too freely, and believe me ever yours most sincerely and gratefully,

RIPON.

In normal circumstances of health this appeal would probably have proved successful, but Gladstone returned home a week after with both sight and hearing so irretrievably impaired as to leave him no alternative but to retire at once. He lost no time in communicating this intention to his colleagues :

*To W. E. Gladstone*

9 CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, S.W., 25th Feb. 1894.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I fear that I must conclude from what you said at the end of the last Cabinet that

you have come to the conclusion that you cannot continue any longer at the head of the Government. To me the thought that this is so is sad beyond expression, and I feel that with your retirement your colleagues, the Liberal Party, and the country will all alike pass into a new and uncertain future fraught with difficulty and doubtful in prospect.

But it is not to speak of this that I trouble you with this letter. It is to tell you once more how greatly I prize the honour of my long connection with you, now dating back for some three and thirty years, how deeply grateful I am to you for the friendship which you have extended to me, and how blank the political world will be to me when your guiding hand is withheld.

As I have stood by your side in many an arduous contest I have come more and more to know the greatness of the qualities which have made you for so long the leader of your fellow-countrymen, and I shall ever regard your constant goodness to me as the most cherished possession of my public life.

To part, if it must be so, from such a chief, is a sorrow indeed. I pray that God may bless you with His choicest blessings, and I beg you to allow me to sign myself.

Ever yours affect. RIPON.

On March 3 the resignation took effect and Lord Rosebery succeeded to the Premiership. Very few changes were made in the Cabinet, the most important being the transfer of Kimberley from the India to the Foreign Office. Ripon remained where he was.

He had already done exceedingly well as Colonial Secretary. This was the more noteworthy because it was an entirely new departure in his career. His father served twice as Colonial Secretary in the days when

that office was associated with the War Department,<sup>1</sup> but the son apparently inherited none of the interest which the elder Ripon manifested in the Colonies, especially during his second tenure of the secretaryship. His early political writings, which aim at covering the whole field of Imperial politics, do not even mention the Colonies, although a large place is given in them to India.<sup>2</sup> One searches in vain the voluminous record of his parliamentary and platform speeches previously to 1892 for any reference to Colonial problems, though these had been neither few nor unimportant in the last decade of that period. And yet there can be no doubt that they occupied a prominent place in his thoughts, for we have seen that in 1858 his intimate friend Sir Charles Douglas prophesied for him—inaccurately as it happened—the Colonial Portfolio in the next Cabinet,<sup>3</sup> and it appears that the actual allocation of it to him in 1892 was made on his own choice.<sup>4</sup> The truth apparently is that in his cautious and mole-like way he had long been burrowing for firm ground among the portentous political issues which had been raised by the new school of Greater Britain Imperialism. At any rate it is certain that when he first set foot in the Colonial Office he astonished all the officials by his detailed knowledge of the whole range of Colonial questions, and by the clear and definite conception of policy he had formed for himself.

It was well that this was so, for in 1892 the new Imperialism had reached a stage when counsels of prudence were much needed. That Ripon was not going to

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, vol. i, p. 16. He gave a very salutary impulse to Emigration schemes under the influence of Gibbon Wakefield and Lord Howick (Egerton: *Colonial Policy*, pp. 281-2).

<sup>2</sup> The writings here referred to are chiefly his *Political Memorandum*, and his *Fragmentary Wild Oats* (*supra*, vol. i, pp. 74-6).

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, vol. i, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> In his letter offering the post to Ripon, Gladstone says that he does so "with special pleasure" because it would "meet your personal inclinations" (August 14, 1892).

enjoy a bed of roses was clearly indicated to him at the outset by the presence of Cecil Rhodes in London, and by the fact that Rosebery, who had become Foreign Secretary, had retired from the Presidency of the Imperial Federation League in order to take up his new post in the Cabinet. Not that Ripon was by any means what is popularly understood as a Little Englander. He had been a Radical Imperialist long before that term came to attach itself to Chamberlain, and he differed only from the new and more hustling school of Imperialists in doubting the practicability of schemes which to this day have remained impracticable. On all the essentials, as once defined by Chamberlain himself,<sup>1</sup> he might have justly claimed to be an orthodox Imperialist, for he felt deeply the ties of kindred, of language, and of liberal tradition which joined the self-governing Overseas Dominions to the Motherland, and, as we have seen in his Indian policy, he recognized that our only justification for ruling alien races was not possession, but our moral obligations to the governed. No Federationist wished more devoutly than he for closer Imperial Union, but he doubted, and quite reasonably, whether the best way to accomplish it was by means of political or economic fetters. Even in the matter of territorial expansion he never failed to give due weight to the exigencies of Imperial security and Imperial obligations. Unfortunately in the nineties this was not enough to vindicate the patriotism of a British statesman. There was a tendency, which became much strengthened as the decade wore on, to dub every man a Little Englander if he could not pledge himself to some unborn scheme of Imperial Federation or to a revival of Tariff Preferences which, half a century earlier, had been abandoned in order to save the Empire from shipwreck.

Both these questions came before him at a very early stage of his tenancy of the Colonial Office. He had for some time been much perplexed by Imperial Federation

<sup>1</sup> Morley: *Recollections*, vol. ii, p. 79.

owing to the number of his Liberal friends—Forster, Dilke, Rosebery, and Bryce—who were among the leaders of the movement on the one hand, and the small appeal which it made to his practical sense on the other. In 1888 Stead asked him to write a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* supporting Cecil Rhodes' view of Federation, but he declined on the ground that "I do not at present see my way clearly about it, and till I do I do not mean to speak about it one way or the other."<sup>1</sup> From this position he had made little advance when a few months after his arrival at the Colonial Office he received from the Imperial Federation League the Report of a Committee appointed by them to study the question.

[CONFIDENTIAL]

To W. E. Gladstone

2. 2. 93.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—The Imperial Federation League have sent me the Report of a Committee which they appointed some time ago to prepare a scheme for promoting the realisation of their objects. Bryce before he was in office was a member of the Committee, and has signed its report, and Rosebery, as you know, was President of the League and feels a great interest in the question which goes by the name of Imperial Federation.

I am myself somewhat of a sceptic on the subject, though honestly desirous to strengthen our Union with the Colonies in all practicable ways. Under all the circumstances it seems to me advisable to send a very civil answer to the League, though maintaining the principle which I believe to be the sound one, that all effective steps in the direction of closer Union must be initiated by the Colonies themselves.

<sup>1</sup> From and to Stead, July 10 and 11, 1888.



I enclose a copy of the Report of the Committee and a draft of the reply which I propose to give it, and I shall be much obliged to you if you will let me know whether you approve of the mode in which I am thinking of dealing with the subject.

Yours &c., RIPON.

The matter was ultimately settled by a Deputation of the League to the Prime Minister, who, while amplifying the view set forth in Ripon's letter, pointed out that any action in regard to it must be postponed until the Home Rule Bill had been cleared out of the way.<sup>1</sup>

But Ripon's scepticism in regard to Federation itself did not by any means extend to subsidiary schemes of the League of which the unifying practicability was more apparent. Thus, for example, he stood firmly by the plan of Naval Defence adopted by the first Colonial Conference in 1887 :

[PRIVATE]

*To Earl Spencer*

1st Decr. 1892.

MY DEAR SPENCER,—I enclose you a letter from Carrington forwarding one from Kintore about the Australian Auxiliary Squadron. We shall send a Despatch on the subject to the Admiralty in a day or two. I learn that there are difficulties connected with the subject. But I hope that you will do all that you can to meet the wishes of the Colonies. It would be greatly regretted if the present arrangements were not to be renewed—and from a political point of view I am convinced that it is worth while to make a serious effort to put up with very serious inconvenience rather than to let the proposals of the Colonial Conference of 1887

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Federation*, vol. viii, pp. 114-15.

come to naught. I am no fanatic for Imperial Federation (Rosebery probably considers me a dangerous heretic), but I believe that we ought to promote all reasonable propositions, accepted by the Colonies, for strengthening the union with them.

The arrangement about the "Auxiliary Squadron" tends in that direction, and it would be a great error to give it up.

Yours &c., RIPON.

It was the same with the projects of a Pacific Cable and of improved steamship communication between Canada and Australia, which, together with "trade relations," the Ottawa Conference of 1894 was summoned to consider. By this time the Home Rule Bill was dead and Rosebery had succeeded to the Premiership. Ripon deftly availed himself of the opportunity of combining with the new Premier against the Treasury for the furtherance of these schemes.

*To the Earl of Rosebery*

COLONIAL OFFICE, 22nd March, 1894.

MY DEAR ROSEBERY,—There is a question of Colonial policy on which I should be glad to know what view you take.

The Australians and Canadians are very anxious to establish closer and more direct communications between each other, both by a new telegraphic line and by a line of steamers from Vancouver to Australia. The proposal for the telegraph has been before you already at the Foreign Office in connection with the question of Necker Island. The Colonies who are themselves ready to subsidise the line want the Impr. Govt. to help either by subsidy or by guarantee, but the Treasury do not smile on the idea, and all that they have

as yet consented to is a small grant of £1,500 from Fiji funds, if this line touches on those islands. This of course is infinitesimal aid.

With respect to the line of steamers they are asking for a Postal subsidy, and the Treasury have referred the matter to a Departmental Committee which is considering the whole question of Post Office subsidies for the Australian mails. This Committee will probably look at the matter in a purely financial aspect and will give little weight to political considerations.

But these considerations are of great weight with me. It seems to me very desirable to encourage and assist the Colonies in a matter of this kind in which they take a strong interest. What is the use of talking about Imperial Federation if we are unwilling to help the Colonies in such cases as this? If you agree generally in this view, I will guide myself by it in any dealings with the Treasury; and if they are recalcitrant will bring the subject before the Cabinet.

A Conference on these questions is about to be held in Canada between representatives of the Dominion and of the Australian Colonies, and they want us to send a delegate. I do not think that it would be wise to send any one with power to bind the Govt. or even to express views on our behalf, but I should like, with your approval, to depute some one to attend the Conference to hear what passes and to give information on matters of fact.

What do you say?

Yours sincerely, RÍPON.

Ripon's calculated *naïveté* in assuming that there could be any doubt as to Rosebery's attitude was not relished by him. "It is scarcely necessary for me,"

he answered curtly, "to say that I associate myself entirely with your view."<sup>1</sup>

This, however, was as far as Ripon was able to go with the Federationists. Their remaining project of inter-Imperial Tariff Preferences he resisted sturdily, not for the sake of Cobdenic dogma, but on the reasoned ground that it would be unjust to the commercial interests of the Mother Country and perplexing to the Colonies themselves, and thus would lead to grievances and controversies which would prove ruinous to Imperial Unity.<sup>2</sup> It was, in short, because he was so good an Imperialist and not because there was any taint of Little Englandism in him that he would have nothing to do with the proposed scheme.

It first came before him under very potent auspices and in very insidious guise towards the end of 1892. Cecil Rhodes, who was then discussing a variety of South African questions in Downing Street and the City, always kept steadily in view the aims and methods of Imperial Federation. He reasoned to himself that, as the German Zollverein had made German Imperial unity, so a South African Customs Union would make for South African Confederation, and to this he added the dubious inference that Imperial Tariff Preferences would make for the Federal Union of the British Empire. This idea was present in his mind in all the various questions he discussed in 1892, and he was even ready to consent to the cession of Swaziland to the Boers, if by that means his South African Customs Union could be completed and a beginning made with Imperial Preferences. So far as Preferences are concerned we have the first outline of his scheme in a letter, very astutely framed to appeal to the Free Trade mind, which he wrote to Ripon during his return journey to the Cape :

<sup>1</sup> March 23, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, pp. 220-1.

*From Cecil Rhodes*

Dec. 6, 92.

DEAR LORD RIPON,— . . . I hope you will carry through the conditions as to tariff with Kruger in case you agree to the cession of Swaziland. It appears to me to be the great question and means if carried the cession of African trade permanently to England. It means *no protection, no prohibition*, which apart from the purely English view are the curses of Australia and the United States. Our present tariff, though high, is only for revenue purposes, and has not, and I am sure will not, force into existence a single fictitious industry at the expense of the general community; it is also a complete reply to the argument that the extension of our Empire is no advantage to the Mother Country as our Colonies when granted self-government repay past favours by doing all they can to exclude English goods. I feel sure if represented well it will take immensely with the English people. I think, if Sir H. Loch succeeds with Kruger, I would suggest it being added as a distinct clause to the Charter.

Please understand I mean the condition should be that the tariff on (British) imported goods should not *exceed* the present Cape tariff. Of course it may be less. The answer to the argument that the condition even if agreed to is sure to be broken is, that there is in every country a strong anti-protection party, that people are very loth to break solemn agreements, and that the anti-protection party plus the Constitution would be almost sure to win, and if temporarily beaten H.M. Government would be justified in disallowing any Bill which was a clear breach of the Constitution and which at the same time had not the united support of the people.

Yours truly, C. J. RHODES.

The earlier part of this letter made a casual reference to the Swaziland question, of no great moment, and to this Ripon "hastened" to reply, but said not a word about the Tariff scheme.<sup>1</sup> Sixteen months later it came again before him. Matabeleland and Mashonaland had meanwhile been conquered, and Rhodes had opened negotiations with Ripon for an agreement settling the administrative powers of the Chartered Company in the new territories. In the draft submitted to the Colonial Office by the Company there appeared a provision restraining the Company from imposing duties on British goods in the sense of Rhodes's proposal of the previous year. This was struck out by Ripon—apparently without any formal explanation.<sup>2</sup> Whereupon Rhodes complained to Rosebery.

*To the Earl of Rosebery*

12. 5. 94.

MY DEAR ROSEBERY,—I hear from the C.O. that Rhodes has made some application to you in regard to a wish of his that we should insert in the Matabeleland "Settlement" a clause obliging the British S.A. Company never to charge higher duties on British goods than those charged by the South African Customs Union—the Company being left free to charge what they like on Foreign goods. The matter is a very small one at this moment in regard to the B.S.A. Co. But it is of course proposed by Rhodes as the thin end of the wedge for the introduction of the Protectionist policy of differential duties within the Empire. I object to that policy, and I feel sure that an attempt on the part of the Mother Country to introduce it in this way would alarm and irritate the Protectionist Colonies in Australia. But I do not think that I need now argue the matter on the

<sup>1</sup> January 20, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> *British South African Company Report*: 1892-1894, pp. 28-30.

merits, for surely it is plain that if we are to make a new departure of this kind in our fiscal policy it ought not to be done by a side wind in the way proposed by Rhodes, but after full and deliberate consideration both by the Government and by Parliament. On these grounds I deprecate giving way to King Rhodes in this case.

Yours &c., RÍPON.

This seems to have proved effectual, for on May 22 the Company accepted the amended draft in a long letter embodying a solemn protest against the rejection of Rhodes's proposal, which, it was stated, had been conceived "in the interests of the English people."<sup>1</sup> Ripon's official rejoinder was not without a touch of acidity. Having pointed out that the fiscal policy of the Empire was outside the scope of the new agreement, and that Her Majesty's Government and their successors might be trusted "to protect the best interests of the British people," he proceeded as follows :

"The principles and objects of that policy [Imperial Preferences] are well known, and they have been advocated by various persons in this country for some time. But whatever may be their merits or demerits the adoption of the policy would involve a departure from the course pursued now for many years by the British Government, and it would be altogether out of the question for Her Majesty's Government to inaugurate such a change, indirectly and as it were by a side wind, in a document of the nature of the Memorandum, which calls for no such provision and to the purposes of which it is admittedly immaterial."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *British South African Company Report, 1892-1894*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Paper No. 177 (1894), "Matabeleland and Mashonaland Settlement."

Ripon's difficulties in taking this stand are amusingly illustrated by a letter he wrote to John Morley when the correspondence came before the House of Commons :

[PRIVATE]

*To John Morley*

13th July, 1894.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I shall be very much obliged to you if you will be so good as to run your eye over the enclosed papers. I understand that it is intended to raise the question to which it relates on the C.O. Vote in Supply. Buxton<sup>1</sup> is not quite sound on fiscal questions of this kind, and though I have perfect confidence that he will defend me loyally his heart will not be in the business—therefore I trust to the biographer of Cobden to protect me against the Fair Traders. I am afraid that Buxton is not the only member of the Government who has leanings to fair trade. Indeed, I have some suspicion of the Prime Minister himself. You will observe that I have not in this correspondence committed the Government to anything definite except that it would not be right to raise so large a question on a side issue. When we get the report of the Ottawa Conference the whole subject will, I imagine, be raised by the resolutions passed there, and it will then have to come before the Cabinet—all the more reason for not having dealt with it in an instrument with which it had really nothing to do.

Yours &c., RIPON.

The Ottawa Conference, the second of the great Imperial Conferences, had just closed with a strong

<sup>1</sup> Now Viscount Buxton. He was then Under-Secretary for the Colonies; served as High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor-General of the Union 1914-20.



demonstration in favour of Imperial Tariff Preferences. It was not until a month later that Lord Jersey, who represented the Imperial Government at the Conference, sent in his Report,<sup>1</sup> and then another ten months elapsed before the Cabinet could be induced to make up its mind on the important questions it raised. Its decision, based on elaborate reports from all the Public Departments concerned, was unfavourable to the main proposal of the Conference, and Ripon was given a free hand to communicate it to the Colonial Governments. He did this in two historic dispatches which rank to-day among the fundamental documents of British fiscal policy.<sup>2</sup>

The Conference had made three proposals. The first was that all existing legislation and treaty stipulations which obstructed preferential trade arrangements within the Empire should be cancelled. The second was that a Customs arrangement should be established between Great Britain and the Colonies by which their trade might be placed on a more favourable footing than that with foreign countries. The third asked that, until the Mother Country should be able to enter into such a Customs arrangement, the Colonies themselves, or such of them as might be so disposed, should be empowered to exchange their products on a preferential basis. On the first and third of these proposals, Ripon substantially acceded to the wishes of the Conference. Indeed, before the Conference met he passed a Bill through Parliament, repealing the only legislative enactments which interfered with the fiscal freedom of the Colonies.<sup>3</sup> It is true that he declined to denounce the treaty stipulations of which the Conference complained, but, inasmuch as these did not interfere with inter-Colonial Preferences, and only restrained the

<sup>1</sup> Blue book, "Colonial Conference, 1894," C. 7553.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Paper, "Ottawa Conference, 1894," C. 7824. For text of dispatches see *infra*, Appendix VIII.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Colonies Duties Act, 1895, 58 and 59 Vict., cap. 3.

granting of preferences to Great Britain which she was not disposed to accept, his decision was no hardship to the Colonies. As for the third proposal, Ripon frankly doubted its wisdom in the interest of the Colonies themselves, but he made no objection to it so long as the unity of the Empire was not imperilled by discriminations against particular Colonies or against the Mother Country. This important reservation was restated in the second dispatch, which dealt with tariff arrangements entered into on behalf of the Colonies with Foreign States. Here also the widest freedom was conceded to the Colonies, subject only to "the strict observance of existing international obligations and the preservation of the unity of the Empire." This was the first time that the conditions of Colonial fiscal freedom were distinctly formulated by the Imperial Government, and it effectually conjured the chief bogey of the "Cut-the-painter" school.

It was, however, in his discussion of the second proposal that the historic significance of Ripon's dispatches mainly consisted. We have here the first official and authoritative examination of the idea of an Imperial Customs arrangement founded, not on tariff uniformity, but on tariff preferences. Its upshot was to show conclusively that such a scheme would restrict commercial freedom all over the Empire, while in the Mother Country it would increase the cost of living, reduce wages, destroy the *entrepôt* trade, and seriously handicap British industry in the open markets of the world. Ripon did not deal with the question as one of economic theory or even of British fiscal tradition. He did not even refer to the disastrous experience of preferences under the old Colonial system or the instructive circumstances in which they had been abandoned by Huskisson half a century before. He examined it exclusively as a practical question in its relation to the existing economic situation of the Empire and its several parts. The result was to show convincingly

that it was as much a delusion as it was a heresy. A further advantage of this treatment of the problem was that it left the door open for a readjustment of British policy in the event of a change in the economic circumstances of the Empire or the adoption by the Colonies themselves of another and wider form of Customs union. Thus it provided for a continuity of policy, and so effectually that Chamberlain afterwards read into it implications in favour of his own fiscal ideas.<sup>1</sup> For twenty-six years Ripon's vindication of British economic policy remained unshaken, although in the interval it was exposed to the formidable and searching onslaught of Chamberlain's fiscal reform agitation. Whether, indeed, it has been shaken by the recent Key Industries legislation is questionable.

The story of the dispatches is a little curious. The first rough drafts were made in consultation with Robert Giffen,<sup>2</sup> then Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trade. Ripon revised and approved them, and then showed them to Bryce and Kimberley, who made further alterations in them.<sup>3</sup> They were ready for the consideration of the Cabinet, when the Government were unexpectedly defeated on June 21 and immediately resigned. Foreseeing a possible reversal of policy by the new Government, Ripon signed the dispatches on June 28 and ordered them to be sent forward at once. Sir Robert Meade, the Permanent Under-Secretary, demurred, and expressed the opinion that at least the Premier should see them. Ripon wrote across the letter "not necessary to send to Rosebery, 1. 7. 95."<sup>4</sup> When on the following day the Ministerial seals were exchanged and Chamberlain succeeded Ripon the dispatches had left for their destinations.

Of more substantial value in its immediate political

<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain: *Foreign and Colonial Speeches*, pp. 171 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ripon to Buxton, August 8, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> Meade to Ripon, June 29, 1895.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

results was Ripon's cautious and industrious management of the affairs of the separate Colonies. This was especially the case with South Africa, then, as for some years after, the storm centre of British Imperial politics. All the elements of the great conflict which, during the closing years of the century, shook the Empire to its foundations, were already in a highly combustible state, and the general political situation was such as to render a conflagration even more difficult to deal with than it proved when the final crisis arrived. Not only was the intolerable position of the Uitlanders<sup>1</sup> in the Transvaal forcing into the open the rivalry of Briton and Boer—as represented respectively by the ambitious personalities of Rhodes and Kruger—for the mastery of South Africa, but that rivalry was prejudiced in favour of the Boers by the incomplete organization of the local British Colonies and their unfavourable situation from the international standpoint.

The spirit in which Ripon approached this delicate problem was explained by him in a letter on the Uitlander question which he wrote to Rosebery in 1894. Sir Henry Loch<sup>2</sup> had expressed himself in favour of a military solution of the question,<sup>3</sup> and in combating this view Ripon said :

“What I look to is a sort of Federal Union of South Africa—British Territory, South African Republic, and Orange Free States—in which we, of course, should have the hegemony, but no more. For my own part I should not want more, and I should care little whether the Transvaal became a British Colony or remained the South African Republic *within such a Federation*. I do not mean by this that it is not very desirable to have the goodwill of the British inhabitants of the Transvaal,

<sup>1</sup> The non-Boer white population of the Transvaal.

<sup>2</sup> Then Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa. Raised to the Peerage as Baron Loch in 1895.

<sup>3</sup> Meade to Ripon, undated but *circa* June 21, 1895.

whatever may be the designation of its Government, in the future, and I look on the retention of that goodwill as a cardinal object of our policy."<sup>1</sup>

The contribution Ripon made to the realization of this ideal, which had been a tradition of the Colonial Office since the days of Lord Carnarvon, was, in a preparatory sense, very considerable. He took a long stride towards simplifying the complexities of British administration and giving it a maximum of effectiveness throughout the sphere of the British influence. This he did by sanctioning Responsible Government in Natal and by paving the way for the annexation of Zululand to that Colony, by annexing Pondoland and giving it over to Cape Colony, by settling the destinies of Bechuana-land, the southern part of which was also joined to Cape Colony,<sup>2</sup> while the northern was promised to the Chartered Company, and, finally, by conferring upon the tremendous dominions of the Company a civilized constitution which made British rule effective in an unbroken line from Table Mountain to Lake Tanganyika. Besides this he abolished the chaotic condominium in Swaziland, and, by way of cementing friendly relations with the Boers, handed over the country to the administration of the South African Republic. This great territorial achievement was not performed without serious difficulty. The work on the Bechuana settlement occupied Ripon throughout his tenure of office, and he had to leave the concluding formalities to his successor. Swaziland was an even greater perplexity and anxiety. The first arrangement with the Boers, concluded in November 1893, broke down, and more than once there was danger of war with the Transvaal before a settlement was reached by the Convention of December 1894. Ripon's difficulties with the Chartered Company have already been glanced at. In all these

<sup>1</sup> September 5, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Ripon to Rosebery, August 16, 1895.

transactions he manifested a patience, a firmness, a clearness of vision, and a spirit of conciliation which have rarely been found in a Colonial Secretary.

But these were only the mechanical aspects of a larger policy which aimed at establishing the peace of South Africa on a solid basis and, at the same time, at securing the hegemony of Great Britain. Here, too, Ripon achieved a striking measure of success. Had he wished to reach his ends by force he had troubled waters enough to fish in, and he knew it. This is shown by a very frank letter he wrote to Rosebery at the height of the Swazi crisis, in which he discussed a possible conflict with the Transvaal. Incidentally the letter throws light on the motives of the Convention negotiated three months later,<sup>1</sup> which happily put an end to the crisis :

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To the Earl of Rosebery*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 4. 9. 94.

MY DEAR ROSEBERY,—I am sorry to tell you that affairs in Swaziland are becoming very complicated, and to some extent threatening. I enclose copies of the recent telegrams about them. Those received on Friday were so important that I went up to London on Saturday and met Loch and Bryce, who is the only member of the Committee of the Cabinet on Swazi affairs at whom I could get, and discussed the situation fully with them at the C.O., with the result that the telegrams dated that day were unanimously agreed to and sent off.

On the one hand the unfortunate Swazis are misled by British Concessionaires, &c., who think it their interest to keep things as they are, while on the other hand the Boers are intriguing to produce a situation of distur-

<sup>1</sup> Hertslet: *Treaties*, vol. xx, pp. 131-5.

bance and danger to life and property which will enable them to go in and occupy Swaziland, getting rid, as they hope, of the stipulations in favour of the Swazis contained in the Conventions of 1890 and 1893. In this connection the recent appointment of a man of the name of Toser as Transvaal Commissioner has a sinister aspect. . . . If the Boers were to go into Swaziland without our approval they would violate the Convention of '90, which remains in force till the end of this year. But if a real case of urgency were to arise with immediate danger to the life and property of the Whites the Govt. of the Transvaal would be entitled under that Convention to enter Swaziland to maintain order without waiting for our approval, and we must bear in mind that it will not be very difficult for a man like Mr. Toser to create this state of things. This situation raises a variety of questions of much delicacy. But the most important of them and that which presses for immediate decision is this. What course are we to take if the Boers on whatever pretext enter Swaziland militarily without obtaining our approval? If they do so are we to acquiesce or protest?

I will take the latter course first. I think you will agree with me that if we protest we must make up our minds at once as to what we mean to do if our protest is disregarded. We might do one of two things. We might make war on the Boers and endeavour to turn them out of Swaziland, a difficult military operation in consequence of the inaccessibility of that country, or we might play off the British element in the S.A.R. against the Boer element and give the Boer Govt. thereby a lot of trouble. To go to war with the Boers about Swaziland I hold to be out of the question. It would be very costly, it would require a large force, S. African

opinion would be against us, and I greatly doubt if the Cabinet could be got to acquiesce.

To take no active steps to enforce our protest, but to press our complaints against the S.A. Republic on account of their treatment of British subjects and support the latter in their claims would be a course having in it more elements of ultimate success than may at first appear, but would be, no doubt, uncertain in its effects and would be represented as mean and cowardly by Ashmead Bartlett *et id genus omne*, for which last I for one should not care. I am therefore reluctantly brought to admit that there is much to be said for letting the Boers go in, if things get worse in Swaziland, and a case can be made out under the Convention of 1890 for their doing so. Swaziland by "manifest destiny" must ultimately go to the Transvaal. The Swazis, misled by interested advisers, are putting themselves more and more into the wrong. If we allow the Boers to go in we can hold them to the terms of the Convention of 1893 and thus give the Swazis very efficient protection for their substantial rights; and last, but not least, we should have S. African opinion with us.

I am inclined, therefore, if troubles increase to adopt this last course; but I feel the grave objections to it, of which the most serious is that the Swazis would probably fight, perhaps desperately, against a Boer occupation undertaken without their consent. . . .

Pray forgive this long story. I hope at least I have made clear the questions on which our immediate decision on policy is required, such as will guide us in detail.

Yours sinclly., RİPON.



Ripon's policy of cultivating good relations with the Transvaal proved eminently successful and bore substantial fruit. It kept the peace on the Rand by the comparative ease with which it obtained satisfaction for the most urgent grievances of the Uitlanders. In pursuing it he found obstacles in unexpected places. Thus Loch, the British High Commissioner, was disposed to force matters with a high hand on the ground, as he hinted in a secret dispatch of July 18, 1894, that the Uitlanders were bound to win in their struggle with the Boers, and that if they won without British help they would probably maintain the independence of the Republic and pursue a policy hostile to Federation. He even proposed in September 1894 to increase the South African Garrison by 5,000 men in order to support the Uitlanders.<sup>1</sup> Ripon promptly vetoed this scheme with the sanction of Rosebery. That it was really unnecessary was shown by the success of Ripon's pacific methods in the irritating Commandeering question which arose out of the claim of the Transvaal Government to conscript the Uitlanders for military service, while denying them the elementary rights of citizenship. The negotiations between London and Pretoria lasted for several months, but in the end Ripon's patience and firmness triumphed. Kruger gave way, released his conscripts, and agreed to settle the whole question by means of a special Convention.<sup>2</sup> When Ripon left office in June 1895, relations with the Transvaal were regarded as so satisfactory that, with the assent of Hercules Robinson,<sup>3</sup> the new High Commissioner, and with the strong approval of Meade, the Permanent Under-Secretary in Downing Street, he proposed to the

<sup>1</sup> Rosebery to Ripon and reply, September 2 and 5, 1894; Meade to Ripon *circa* June 21, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Paper, "South African Republic," C. 8159.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Lord Rosmead. Ripon sent him out to South Africa on a special mission in December 1894, and in the following year appointed him High Commissioner.

Queen the conferment of a G.C.M.G. on Kruger.<sup>1</sup> Six months later the whole of this good work was undone by the Jameson Raid. The subsequent policy of "blood and iron" then became inevitable.

The idea, widely entertained at the time, that Ripon's amiability to the Boers was detrimental to the vital interests of Great Britain in South Africa, was nothing more than a Party calumny. As a matter of fact, at no time were these interests more vigilantly and firmly upheld. If he pursued peace with unwavering persistency he was not less intent on securing the British hegemony, which was also an integral part of his policy. He was even a little meticulous in this respect. In February 1895 the question whether there was still a British suzerainty over the Transvaal came momentarily to the surface. Kimberley, in a dispatch to our Ambassador in Berlin, had casually referred to the suzerainty as having been abandoned in the Convention of 1884. Happily he sent a draft to Ripon before forwarding it to its destination. Ripon at once expostulated :

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

9 CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, S.W., 15th February 1895.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,—I quite agree to these drafts. There is one expression in a private letter to Malet<sup>2</sup> on which I will say a word.

You say "*We gave up* the clause as to suzerainty." Practically this is probably true, but we have never said so to the Transvaal, and saying so to Germany is as good as saying so to Kruger. What we did do in '84 was to say nothing about the suzerainty which was mentioned in the Convention of '81. The L[aw] O[fficers] say that they are inclined to think that this should be

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Queen, June 21, 1895; Meade to Ripon, undated but *circa* June 21.

<sup>2</sup> British Ambassador in Berlin 1881-95.

regarded as a waiver of the suzerainty, but they do not speak positively, confining themselves to the statement that we have no right of interference except under the Convention of '84 and as regards engagements with Foreign States under Article IV.

Answers in this sense have been given in Parliament, but we have never made any declaration of our having renounced the suzerainty.

I do not think the point of practical importance ; but the words " give up " go beyond anything we have yet said openly.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

Kimberley agreed to amend his dispatch,<sup>1</sup> and the precedent was of no small value to Chamberlain later on when the relations with the Transvaal reached breaking-point.<sup>2</sup>

Of far greater importance were the steps Ripon took to close the access of the Boers to the sea. Here, as in many other vital questions of policy, he acted on his own initiative. His most trusted advisers thought lightly of it, and Hercules Robinson himself had expressed the opinion that in view of the naval supremacy of Great Britain a Boer port could do no harm and might even do good by propitiating Kruger.<sup>3</sup> But Ripon saw clearly that if the Transvaal could once fly a flag on the ocean he might bid farewell to his dream of British hegemony. The situation was a dangerous one. The Boers were flirting with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay, Amatongaland was virtually open to them, and under the Swazi Convention of 1890 they had actually been granted the right of constructing a railway through the Trans-Pongolo territories and of acquiring a foothold

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Ripon, February 16, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> *Fortnightly Review*, February 1890, p. 291.

on the coast at Kosi Bay.<sup>1</sup> During the whole of his tenure of office, Ripon's eyes were anxiously glued on this part of the east coast. Not a disturbance occurred in the Portuguese possessions which might give an opportunity for Boer intervention but he at once trotted round to the Foreign Office and worried Kimberley to send gunboats to Delagoa Bay.<sup>2</sup> His chance of settling the whole question and of finally sealing up the east coast came with the Swazi crisis of 1893-4. The Boers had not yet availed themselves of the important concessions they had obtained in the Convention of 1890, though their filibusters were busy in Amatongaland. Ripon determined that if he gave them Swaziland those concessions should be cancelled, and he introduced a clause in the Convention of 1893 which modified them and which, after a tense struggle, the Boers accepted. The Clause—repeated in the final Convention of the following year—provided that no railway should be constructed by the Transvaal east of the Swazi frontier, save under a special Convention with Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> This was in December 1894. In April of the following year Ripon annexed all the Trans-Pongoland territories, and he followed this up in May by the annexation of Amatongaland.<sup>4</sup> Lord Bryce has truly said that "the establishment of the protectorate over these petty Tonga chiefs may be justly deemed one of the most important events in recent South African history."<sup>5</sup>

To keep the Boers from the sea was, however, only one-half of the task. It was also necessary to keep enemy powers from the Boers. Here, as Ripon speedily recognized, the danger came, not from France, as was

<sup>1</sup> Hertslet: *Treaties*, vol. xviii, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> See, for examples, letters to and from Kimberley, September 28 and 29, 1894.

<sup>3</sup> Hertslet: *Treaties*, vol. xx, pp. 128, 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 151.

<sup>5</sup> Bryce: *Impressions of South Africa*, p. 210.

then generally thought,<sup>1</sup> but from Germany. Ripon had learnt to dislike Germany. At the very outset of his tenure of office he protested to Rosebery against granting facilities to the Germans to land cannon at Walfish Bay on the ground that "they are a brutal people in their treatment of natives, and if we favour them and deviate to their advantage from the rules of strict neutrality, it will make the task of governing our own natives more difficult than it is."<sup>2</sup> The trouble with Germany on the east coast first became serious in the autumn of 1894, when Ripon was feverishly contemplating the annexation of the territories which still lay open between Swaziland and the sea. An inkling of what might happen seems to have dawned on the German Foreign Office, and the whole "reptile" press was mobilized to denounce what were thought to be British designs on Delagoa Bay. Ripon and Kimberley consulted, and it was determined to ask the Admiralty to send the *Philomel* to Delagoa Bay and at the same time seek authority from the Cabinet to warn Germany against interference in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> The latter course, however, presented difficulties. "I am afraid," wrote Ripon to Kimberley, "there is little chance of our being able to take a firm line with the Germans in the face of Harcourt's dread of a strong word and of Rosebery's hatred of the French, which throws us inevitably on German support."<sup>4</sup> The result was that the trouble continued, and towards the end of November, while the Swazi crisis was still unsolved, Ripon made up his mind to take the matter into his own hands and carry out the annexations already referred to.

<sup>1</sup> Relations with France were then extremely strained, and there was even some reason for fearing French interference in South Africa. (Meade to Ripon, *circa* June 21, 1895.)

<sup>2</sup> Letters to and from Rosebery, June 7, 1893.

<sup>3</sup> Kimberley to Ripon, October 19, 1894.

<sup>4</sup> October 21, 1894.

[SECRET]

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

COLONIAL OFFICE, 25 November 1894.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,—The tone of the German press about South Africa seems to me to make it necessary that we should at once consider what course we ought to take about the position of Zambaan, Mubegesa "the widow," and Tongaland. As you know, the Transvaal are nibbling at Zambaan's territory and have got a man there who pretends to exercise some sort of jurisdiction. Affairs with Mubegesa and the Widow are perhaps less immediately pressing, but if we mean to annex Zambaan we had better annex them too, so as to avoid the irritating appearance of frequent successive annexations.

Tongaland stands upon a somewhat different footing. Part of it, as you know, Salisbury acknowledged to be within the Portuguese sphere. That we must leave alone, but the rest we claim as within our sphere. We might send a mission to Zambili, the Queen, and try to get her assent to the establishment of a British Protectorate over that part of her territory which is within our sphere; but Portugal would, I suppose, encourage her to refuse, and the mission itself would probably disturb the minds of the German colonials. But again I say that we ought to get all these small matters settled at the same time.

The German inclination to take the Transvaal under their protection is a very serious thing. To have them meddling at Pretoria and Johannesburg would be fatal to our position and our influence in South Africa, and I think, therefore, that we ought to come to some clear

conclusion as to how their intrigues are to be met. Are we to try and bind the Transvaal to us by concessions to them such as the sacrifice of Zambaan's territory and the revision of the London Convention, or are we prepared to say squarely to Germany that the Transvaal is within our sphere of influence and that they must keep their hands off? Either line may be taken; but one or other ought to be adopted at once.

Yours &c., RIPON.

Kimberley acquiesced on both points, and, indeed, had already spoken with the German Ambassador without troubling the Cabinet :

[PRIVATE]

*From the Earl of Kimberley*

35 LOWNDES SQUARE, S.W., Nov. 25. 94.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I entirely agree with you that the German attitude in South-East Africa makes it indispensable that we should put our house in order.

As to the Transvaal, I am prepared to tell Germany that they must keep their hands off. You will have observed that I used significant language to Hatzfeldt when I told him that in matters concerning the Portuguese Colonies we were a great sea power, and could speak the strongest word, if need be. The Germans must be made to understand that while we are most anxious to have cordial relations with them, we will stand no bullying.

Yours sincerely, KIMBERLEY.

Unfortunately—owing to the continued tension with France—the formal warning to Germany was never

uttered,<sup>1</sup> but when the Delagoa Bay railway was opened in the following summer and Germany sent her mission to the festivities in a warship, Ripon and Kimberley insisted to the Cabinet on the dispatch of an imposing British squadron under Admiral Rawson. This was done. As subsequent events showed, it did not stop German intrigues, but it produced a wholesome effect throughout South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

These were the outstanding features of Ripon's three years' management of the affairs of Greater Britain. They were, however, far from monopolizing all his activities. He had to deal with a large number of other important Colonial questions, such as the Newfoundland domestic crisis and the French Shore, the future of Uganda, the perplexities of the triple condominium in Samoa, and the frontier difficulties between Venezuela and British Guiana. Uganda was made a British Protectorate with his full approval in 1894. On the sagacious recommendation of Buxton he annexed the Solomon Islands and thus prevented them from falling into the hands of France.<sup>3</sup> The policy which maintained Western Siam as a buffer between the French and Burma was his,<sup>4</sup> and he was the real author of the Federation of the Malay States, which has made so conspicuously for the prosperity of those States and the consolidation of British dominion in the East Indies.<sup>5</sup> At the same time he gave a marked impulse to railway development in Africa. He made the ex-

<sup>1</sup> As late as January 30, 1895, we find Ripon insisting to Kimberley on a formal notification to Germany that we regarded the Transvaal as within our sphere of influence. "I am afraid," he writes prophetically, "that if something of this kind is not done, we shall drift into an unpleasant position with Germany."

<sup>2</sup> Hercules Robinson to Ripon, June 5 and 12, 1895. See also letters from and to Kimberley, January 14 and 15, 1895.

<sup>3</sup> From and to Buxton, September 10 and December 10, 1892; to Rosebery, December 15, 1892.

<sup>4</sup> To Rosebery, June 26 and July 27, 1893.

<sup>5</sup> The Treaty of Federation was signed in July 1895, a few days after Ripon left office. (Parl. Paper C.—8661, p. 4.)



tension of the Bechuanaland railway possible by the grant of a financial guarantee, and he took all the preliminary steps for introducing railways into Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Lagos.<sup>1</sup> He found time also to help other departments with his rich administrative experience. Kimberley did very little in the Foreign Office without consulting him, and it is especially noteworthy that during the whole of those three years—despite the most serious discouragements—he used all his influence to counteract the pro-German policy of the Government and to pave the way for an *entente* with France.<sup>2</sup> During Kimberley's short tenure of the India Office many Indian questions were referred to him, and he was also consulted by the War Secretary, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, on questions of War Office and Army Reform.

<sup>1</sup> From a Memorandum kindly supplied to the present writer by Lord Buxton.

<sup>2</sup> See particularly letters to Kimberley, January 22, 1893, and May 5, 1894.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE LIBERAL LEADERSHIP

(1895—1905)

GLADSTONE'S retirement in March 1894 had been followed by discords in the Liberal Party, which very soon assumed the character of veritable anarchy. The choice of a successor lay between Rosebery and Harcourt. Both were the objects of a vehement opposition. Harcourt's qualifications in political and parliamentary experience, in party service, and in debating skill were far superior to those of Rosebery, but he was not popular in the country, and, although he commanded a large following in the Commons, he was disliked by his immediate colleagues in the Cabinet. Rosebery was popular in the country and the Cabinet, but as a Peer and an Imperialist was anathema to the Radicals in the Commons. His sympathy with Gladstonian Liberalism was more than suspect, and his want of personal experience of the Lower House deprived him of value as a Party tactician. The choice eventually fell on Rosebery, and it is impossible to doubt, on sifting the evidence, that the main reason for it was not any question of principle or even of personal attachment, but the impossibility of recruiting a Cabinet which would endure Harcourt's ill-temper. Rosebery was well aware of the difficulties which confronted him, but he agreed to sacrifice himself to the wishes of his colleagues.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, clear that a Leader chosen in these circumstances to carry on a task which had taxed

<sup>1</sup> Morley: *Recollections*, vol. ii, pp. 15, 23.

Gladstone's matchless powers to the utmost could not but prove a failure.

In a moment of impulsive generosity Harcourt had thrown in his lot with Rosebery, and had consented to lead the Commons practically without conditions.<sup>1</sup> Troubles, however, were not slow to develop. "Though I have never had the gout," wrote Rosebery to Ripon after a Cabinet Council in April, "I can conceive impartial persons preferring it to such a Cabinet as we enjoyed yesterday."<sup>2</sup> A fortnight later Kimberley writes to Ripon in reference to a decision of the Cabinet of which Harcourt disapproved:—

"Harcourt wrote me an absurd letter full of blood and thunder, which I need hardly tell you had not the slightest effect on me. I mean the violent language. His *opinions* I, of course, pay due regard to: only, if they were expressed in rational terms, they would be more likely to carry weight with me. However, it's rather wearisome."<sup>3</sup>

The private gossip of Ministers at this period is full of complaints of a like kind. Towards the end of 1894 friendly relations between Harcourt and quite a number of his colleagues had almost ceased, and his consultations with the Prime Minister had to be carried on through a third party.<sup>4</sup> In February 1895 conditions became so difficult that Rosebery, whose health was not equal to the strain, resolved to resign, and it was only at the earnest prayer of his colleagues that he changed his mind.<sup>5</sup> This was the "wearisome" situation when on June 21, 1895, the Government were defeated in a "scratch" division in Committee of

<sup>1</sup> Morley: *Recollections*, vol. ii, pp. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> April 24, 1894.

<sup>3</sup> May 6, 1894.

<sup>4</sup> Asquith to Ripon, February 6, 1896.

<sup>5</sup> Ripon to Rosebery, February 21, 1895.

Supply. The rebuff was of no importance, but it was more than the distracted Cabinet could bear. It at once resigned, and was succeeded by the Unionists under Salisbury. The General Election which followed found the whole Liberal party in a state of hopeless confusion, and the result was a *débâcle* without precedent in its history.

The rivalry for the Premiership was now at an end, but the Leadership question remained and was even more embarrassing than before. The recriminations which followed the General Election, during which three Leaders—Rosebery, Harcourt, and Morley—proclaimed three different policies, produced a new aggravation, and the question of how the Opposition were to be captained in the new Parliament at once posed itself. Ripon was the first to take action in the matter. The mutual paralysis of Rosebery, Harcourt, and Morley left him in a position of peculiar responsibility. It is true that two other members of the late Cabinet, Spencer and Kimberley, were, in a technical sense and by virtue of the offices they had held, nearer to the reversion of the Leadership than he, but neither was inclined to take any initiative, and both were quite content to be consulted by Ripon. These consultations began on August 1 with a letter from Ripon to Kimberley, and it was agreed to urge Rosebery to take his place in the Lords when the new Parliament met on August 12. Ripon's overtures were for the moment unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup> But this was not the worst. Within a few days a new and more violent quarrel broke out between the Leader and his mutinous lieutenant.

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 17th August 1895.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,— . . . I went up to London on Wed., Spencer having telegraphed to me to say that

<sup>1</sup> Ripon to Rosebery, August 13, 1895.

he thought I had better do so, and on arrival recd. the startling news of Rosebery's "irrevocable decision not to meet Harcourt in Council any more." You heard from Spencer what has passed; I need not therefore repeat it, and I have little fresh to add. But, perhaps, you might like to know the impression left on my mind by all that I heard while in Town.

I saw Rosebery himself and had  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour's talk with him—he seemed quite determined, and said that he would not consent to be bound in any way by anything which Harcourt might say or do.

Harcourt professed to take the matter very easily and to treat it as an ebullition of bad temper. He was as mild and civil as possible in manner and language, and I thought anxious to be conciliatory towards his other colleagues. No doubt he sees that Rosebery's step is a very good thing for him (H.), and that if he persists in the intention he has now announced and brings things thereby to a deadlock, it will not redound to his advantage with the Party. You and I know the provocations R. has had, but the Party are little acquainted with them and will look on him as the cause of a fatal quarrel.

On Thursy. eveng. I saw Asquith<sup>1</sup> in the House of Lords, and to my surprise he seemed to think that the affair would blow over and that things would go on as usual when the working Session begins in February. I hope it may be so, but it is to me unintelligible that a man should inform his enemy that it is his irrevocable intention never to meet him again in Council, and should then in a few months quietly resume his relations with him as if nothing had happened. If R. does so it will be the best thing for the Party, but it will be fatal to

<sup>1</sup> Home Secretary, 1892-5; Prime Minister, 1908-16.

his ever exercising any control over Harcourt, who will for the future be justified in despising his threats. If Rosebery persists the Party will become Leaderless, and must somehow or other choose between R. and H. or select a new Leader. If he gives way he will lose dignity and greatly weaken his influence with those who know what has passed. It is a most unpleasant prospect.

I thought Rosebery's speech on the Address a striking one, and it has evidently taken with the public. I wish he had not reintroduced the "dominant partner."

Salisbury's speech about Armenia was pretty stiff, was it not ?

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

Both Rosebery and Harcourt had meanwhile appeared in their places in their respective Houses, but, happily, owing to the brevity of the Session and the absence of any controversial topics there was no overt manifestation of their disagreement. Ripon began to hope with Asquith that the quarrel would blow over and that some tacit understanding would be reached by February. Unfortunately, the close of the year was marked by a number of political crises of the first magnitude, which required from the Opposition definite and agreed conceptions of policy. The agitation caused by the Armenian massacres reached an acute stage, which threatened to reopen the Eastern question. In December President Cleveland sent a message to the United States Congress which was virtually an ultimatum to Great Britain to settle her long-standing frontier dispute with Venezuela. A few weeks later the whole world was startled by the news of the Jameson Raid and the consequent symptoms of a German intervention in South Africa.

Gladstone was on his way to Biarritz when the Venezuelan message was announced, and he wrote from Folkestone a hurried and almost illegible note to Ripon,

urging him to bring the Liberal Leaders together, so that they might speak with one voice in support of the Government against Cleveland's "astounding folly"<sup>1</sup>:

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 28. 12. 95.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,—I have just received the enclosed letter from Gladstone. The main point of it is, as you will see, that there ought to be consultation among the leaders of the Party as to the exact language to be used at the meeting of Parliament about the Venezuelan question. He knows perfectly well the state of affairs between Rosebery and Harcourt, and talked to me about it when I was at Hawarden a few weeks ago. Rosebery has let him see the correspondence—so when he speaks about consultation he is quite aware of what he is saying. For my part I agree with Gladstone. I think that on broad public grounds the Opposition ought to determine on their language before Parliament meets—Gladstone speaks of this as the duty of the leaders of the Party, and I think he is right, but I think it is also our duty to the country. I suppose we shall agree to support Salisbury fully as against Cleveland, but besides this we ought at least to know, if we do not say, how we should deal with Venezuela apart from the U.S. On this too we shall probably agree with the Govt.; but it is not a matter on which we should speak with two voices. No doubt a proposal for consultation may bring the difference between Rosebery and Harcourt to an acute point, but I do not see how this can be avoided. I never thought that it would be possible to avoid it after Parliament meets.

<sup>1</sup> December 27, 1895.

When I discussed the relations between Rosebery and Harcourt with Gladstone at Hawarden, he seemed much impressed with the unfairness to the Party of letting them suppose that they had a body of leaders acting together and guiding their counsels, when, in fact, there was nothing of the kind. It is hard to answer this. I suppose that I ought to send Gladstone's present letter to Rosebery. What do you think? and if I send it should I add my own opinion?

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

The letter was in due course sent to Rosebery, who replied with a neat little discourse on the Venezuelan question but said not a word on consultation.<sup>1</sup> January was now wearing on, and other members of the Party besides Ripon and Kimberley began to get anxious as to what might happen on the reassembly of Parliament. Asquith, who was in the confidence of Rosebery, wrote to Ripon suggesting concerted pressure on the rival leaders.<sup>2</sup> There seemed some reason for hoping that if Harcourt made the first advances Rosebery might give way, but no one could be found who was on sufficiently friendly terms with Harcourt to broach the proposal to him. Herschell, the late Lord Chancellor, who was everybody's friend and who had a perfect genius for smoothing over difficulties, was appealed to by Ripon,<sup>3</sup> but even he confessed himself baffled.<sup>4</sup> Eventually Asquith went to both Parties and put the case bluntly to them, and on February 6, five days before the meeting of Parliament, a *modus vivendi* was patched up. It was agreed to resume the arrangement of 1894-5, under which "free and full consultation" took place through the "intermediation" of a third party.<sup>5</sup> This was far from satisfactory, but, at any

<sup>1</sup> January 5, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> January 10, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> January 11, 1896.

<sup>4</sup> January 19, 1896.

<sup>5</sup> Asquith to Ripon, February 6, 1896.



rate, it averted the danger of an open conflict for a time, more especially as it was accompanied by an assurance that there was no likelihood of a serious divergence of opinion on any of the important political questions then pending.

Two of these questions were easily removed from the field of party discord. Salisbury, who was now Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, treated the American Menace with admirable tact and temper, and an arrangement to arbitrate on the Venezuelan boundary was soon negotiated. The Jameson Raid was more delicate, especially in the appeal it made to anti-Jingo sensitiveness below the Gangway, but as Ripon had been Colonial Secretary in the previous Cabinet it was peculiarly within his province, and his advice weighed decisively with the Opposition Front Bench.<sup>1</sup> His experience of South African politics and the shrewd measure he took of the men figuring in it, led him quickly to sympathize with Chamberlain and to support him in his policy. He writes to Buxton on January 4 :

“ Your account of your conversation with Chamberlain is most interesting. He has, indeed, fallen on hard times, and my cold old age prevents my sharing your desire that we were still in Downing Street. The position with a narrow majority would have been unbearable ; and it is a very good thing for the country that they have at such a moment a Ministry with an overwhelming majority.<sup>2</sup> Jameson’s proceedings are not only indefensible, nay scandalous, but also insane. . . . Chamberlain appears to be acting rightly and will deserve all our support.”

Through the medium of the ever-faithful Buxton

<sup>1</sup> Harcourt got his speeches on the Raid approved by Ripon before he delivered them. (Buxton to Ripon, February 7, 1896.)

<sup>2</sup> Bryce expressed the same opinion in a letter to Ripon on January 2.

close relations were established between Chamberlain and Ripon during the crisis, and the more important dispatches on the Raid and the Transvaal question were communicated to Ripon before they were sent forward.<sup>1</sup> The same collaboration continued during the inquiry of the Select Committee, on which Buxton represented Ripon and the proceedings of which he reported to him daily. With Chamberlain's subsequent "whitewashing" of Rhodes he was not in agreement, but he made no public protest.<sup>2</sup>

Though the Third Party expedient seemed to work smoothly enough Rosebery remained ill at ease, especially in regard to the larger planks in the Liberal platform, on which he foresaw that trouble was sooner or later inevitable. In August he went to Studley for some shooting and talked over the whole situation with Ripon. At the same time he threw out broad hints about resignation, the intention of which Ripon did not, at the time, appreciate. What he said, however, about his views on Home Rule caused Ripon a "heavy heart," and he expostulated with him strongly. Rosebery remained unmoved, and when he left it was arranged that the conversations should be resumed at Dalmeny in November.<sup>3</sup> These conversations never took place.

In September another source of Party strife reached an angry stage. For over two years humanitarian sentiment throughout Europe had been outraged by the atrocities of the Turks in Armenia. Kimberley, while at the Foreign Office, had used strong language to the Sultan and had endeavoured to carry the Great Powers with him in a policy of coercion. Salisbury followed in his footsteps with equal energy, but it had become plain that Russia would neither join in coercion nor tolerate the separate intervention of other Powers.

<sup>1</sup> Letters from Buxton and Meade, February 7 and 8, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Buxton, April 12, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from Rosebery, August 16, September 2, and October 13, 1896; and to Spencer, October 8, 1896.

There was danger of a European war, and Rosebery, at the beginning of the Session of 1896, had strongly counselled prudence. His attitude had been warmly commended by sober opinion throughout the country, and leading Liberals like Kimberley, Spencer, Ripon, Asquith, and Edward Grey were heartily with him. On the other hand, the Left Wing of the Party derided the dangers of European complications and clamoured for the immediate and condign punishment of the Red Sultan. With them went a great body of emotional and unreflecting opinion. On September 24 Gladstone emerged from his retreat at Hawarden and addressed an immense gathering at Liverpool on the question of the hour. He openly supported the views of the interventionists as justified by Treaty obligations and moral duty, though he admitted, somewhat weakly, that if the concert of Europe proved to be in earnest in their opposition the intervention could not be proceeded with. This was the last straw to Rosebery, and on October 6, without consulting any of his friends, he made public announcement of his resignation of the Liberal Leadership.

Ripon again took the lead in this new crisis. He was very angry with Rosebery :

[SECRET]

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

STUDLEY ROYAL, Oct. 8/96.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,—I have been startled this morn<sup>g</sup> by reading in the newspaper Rosebery's letter to Tom Ellis. When he was here in August he talked to me about his views in regard to Irish matters in a way which made me uneasy, and he said something in passing about its being perhaps the best thing that he s<sup>ld</sup> retire from the Leadership, but he never led me to dream that he w<sup>ld</sup> take such a step as he has now

taken without further consultation with his colleagues. . . . He speaks of his differences with Gladstone about the Armenian matter. But what are they? The only one that I know of relates to Mr. G.'s proposal to withdraw our Ambassador from Constantinople—but surely that is a point upon which a difference of opinion with our late leader need not be purged by resignation.

His resignation at this moment must have a ruinous effect on the Party, and may very likely produce a fresh split. At all events it reduces us to absolute impotence for the time. Neither does it seem to me, I must confess, to be a patriotic step to take at a critical time in our foreign relations.

What a position it leaves us in who supported him as Prime Minister! It hands us over body and soul to Harcourt unless we prefer, as I in all probability shall, to retire from public life altogether. I do not want to be hard on him, for he has destroyed himself even more than he has destroyed us. But I can see no justification for the course which he has adopted.

Yrs. sincerely, RIPON.

He wrote almost in the same terms to Spencer, and two days later addressed a remonstrance to Rosebery himself :

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To the Earl of Rosebery*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 10th Oct. 1896.

MY DEAR ROSEBERY,—What can I say to you about the step which you have taken? I deplore it on every ground. I think you exaggerate the differences of opinion between yourself and the Liberal Party on the Armenian matter, and I am sure that if at the beginning

of the movement you had called your colleagues together as you did at Mentmore last Feby. and explained your views to them, it would have been easy to agree upon a common line of policy to be followed by us and recommended to the Party.

Of course I know that this Armenian business is not the only cause of your resignation. From a Party point of view it *may* have been best that you should put your retirement on that ground, though from a public point of view I cannot think that it was. But no choice of the particular reason to be assigned for this step can mitigate the harm which has been thereby inflicted on the Party—you have handed us over to Harcourt without escape, and you are not ignorant of all which that means.

I shall ever feel grateful to you for the consideration and confidence which you always showed to me, and I rejoice to have been connected with your Government. To my mind we accomplished much with very small means and in most difficult circumstances.

Yours ever sincerely, RIPON.

Both Kimberley and Spencer agreed at first with Ripon in his gloomy estimate of Rosebery's conduct and its consequences,<sup>1</sup> but after a little reflection they all three saw reason to adopt a brighter view. Ripon had not been quite just to Rosebery, and Kimberley took an opportunity of pointing this out to him. His letter goes to the root of the matter :

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*From the Earl of Kimberley*

KIMBERLEY HOUSE, WYMONDHAM, NORFOLK, Oct. 16/96.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I think Rosebery was in a real

<sup>1</sup> Letters from Kimberley, October 9 and 11, and from and to Spencer, October 10 and 15, 1896.

difficulty. A man of his abilities, which are undoubtedly great, could never be satisfied unless he was a real leader.

In our Party this is almost impossible for a Peer, especially a Peer who has not previously made his mark in the Commons. It can only be at all possible if the leader in the Commons has the most cordial relations with him, and looks up to him as his leader.

In all the cir<sup>cs</sup> I am not disposed to be angry with R. for seizing an opportunity to get out of an intolerable situation. It must be remembered too that he was most reluctant to take the post of Prime Minister, and he only did so because he felt as we all did, that it would be discreditable to us and the whole Party if we had been unable to continue the Govt. after G.'s retirement. . . .

Yours ever sincerely, KIMBERLEY.

Another point on which Ripon's perspicacity had momentarily failed him, was the opportunity he imagined would now be afforded Harcourt to seize the Leadership. Kimberley had agreed with him and had prophesied that the whole of the Party in the Commons would rally round Harcourt.<sup>1</sup> A very few days sufficed to show that this view was wrong. When Rosebery followed up his letter of resignation by his farewell speech at Edinburgh, several prominent Liberals in the Commons—among them Asquith, Fowler, and Bryce<sup>2</sup>—manifested their sympathy with him by appearing by his side on the platform, and Rosebery even used words which were widely interpreted as indicating Asquith as his political heir.<sup>3</sup> This was the beginning of a new

<sup>1</sup> October 9, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> Fowler had been Secretary for India and Bryce Chancellor of the Duchy in Rosebery's Cabinet. Both were subsequently raised to the Peerage, the first as Viscount Wolverhampton and the second as Viscount Bryce.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, October 11, 1896.

fissure, which was destined three years later to produce a more serious dislocation in the Party. Ripon, however, had no taste for further dissensions and he acted with excellent decision and promptitude. As there was no longer any danger of an uncontested Harcourt Leadership, he strongly advised Spencer and Kimberley that no action should be taken on the question, that Harcourt should be left in his limited position in the Commons, and that when Rosebery gave up his Leadership of the Liberal Peers, which he had not yet done, a successor to him in that capacity should be elected. In that way, he argued, they would all be saved from the Harcourt yoke, and the road would be kept open for an eventual return of Rosebery to the Leadership of the Party.<sup>1</sup> This astute advice was followed.

Rosebery's resignation of his Leadership in the Lords was announced towards the end of November, and Ripon at once set about to find a successor :

[PRIVATE]

*To Earl Spencer*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 11th Dec. 1896.

MY DEAR SPENCER,— . . . Who the Leader should be there can, I imagine, be no doubt. Kimberley led us before admirably and we must turn to him again. The question then arises, how is he to be installed. If I remember rightly, when Granville died a meeting of Liberal Peers was called at Oxenbridge's house and Kimberley was chosen. I suppose that the same course ought to be pursued now. But if so the meeting must be held before the day on which Parliament meets, as we must have a leader regularly installed to perform his proper functions in the Debate on the Address.

If my view of proceeding is right, what steps ought to be taken to call the meeting and where should it be

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Kimberley and Spencer, October 15, 1896.

held? In consequence of Kensington's sad death we have no Head Whip in the House of Lords. Who, then, should issue the notices of the meeting? As to the place, if Spencer House is available no place could be better. It would scarcely do to call it at Kimberley's, I think. Please let me know what you think on these matters.

I found Rosebery full of life, and evidently beginning to work for a future Leadership free from the Harcourt connection—I hope he will not try to push matters too quickly. After all that has happened we must have time to consider our position and see how things go.

What good work you have been doing in the Midlands!  
Yours sincerely, RIPON.

Spencer agreed, and Ripon undertook to persuade Kimberley. In this he was successful. The meeting of Peers was summoned by Ripon, Spencer, Kimberley, Herschell, and Tweedmouth, and was held at Spencer House on January 18, 1897, when Kimberley was unanimously elected.<sup>1</sup> Ripon continued to watch over the smooth working of the new arrangement. In this respect his chief care was to ensure harmonious relations between the two Liberal Leaders, and he suggested to Kimberley, even before his election, that he should make the first advances to Harcourt. Kimberley followed his advice.<sup>2</sup>

[PRIVATE]

*From the Earl of Kimberley*

KIMBERLEY HOUSE, WYMONDHAM, NORFOLK, Jan. 5/97.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I have had a very satisfactory answer from Harcourt to the letter I wrote him. We

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Spencer and Kimberley, December 13, and from Kimberley, December 14, 1896; also to and from Spencer, December 16 and 17, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> To and from Kimberley, January 1 and 2, 1897.



shall begin well. The question will be how long it will last. I propose to go up to town (to Lowndes Sqre.) on Saturday the 16th, and as Harcourt will be up, we shall, I expect, meet and have a talk on Sunday.

Yours sincerely, KIMBERLEY.

So far as Kimberley and Harcourt were concerned all went well for close on two years, and we have the testimony of Kimberley himself that the harmony of their relations remained quite undisturbed.<sup>1</sup> But the Party, as a whole, did not recover its discipline, and Rosebery's position as a Leader *en exil* could not, even with the utmost loyalty on his part, but lend a certain substance to the rumours and appearances of sectional intrigues. What Gladstone had been to Hartington and to Rosebery himself, Rosebery was now to Harcourt. The political circumstances of 1897 and 1898 helped to aggravate Harcourt's irritability. They were years of great international complications—Kiao Chau, Port Arthur, Fashoda, and the prelude to the Boer war—which especially stimulated the activities of the little knot of Liberals who were popularly regarded as the depositaries of the Rosebery tradition. Throughout 1898 Rosebery himself was more than usually industrious on the platform, and although there was no flagrant dissonance of opinion, the effect was certainly to throw the *de facto* leaders into the shade. Harcourt seems to have persuaded himself that a plot for a Rosebery restoration was actually on foot, and when, in December, Edward Grey, who had been Rosebery's Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and was one of his most devoted disciples, made a speech on foreign policy without consulting his official leaders, Harcourt precipitately resigned.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, January 26, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Buxton on January 4, 1899, Ripon states positively that this was the cause of the resignation.

The official communication of his decision was made to Morley, who, for reasons which have never been explained, elected to retire with him from the councils of the Party. This letter has already been published, but it is less indicative of Harcourt's state of mind at the time than the letter to the same effect which he wrote to Ripon :

[SECRET]

*From Sir W. V. Harcourt*

MALWOOD, LYNDHURST, Decr. 12, '98.

MY DEAR RIPON,—The transactions which are going on secretly and publicly on the subject of the Leadership have forced me to a decision which I think will not surprise you. The situation has become intolerable. I have resolved not to appear in the House of Commons in the approaching Session in the character of Leader of the Opposition. I need not say that it is not my intention to leave Parlt., but I have come to the conclusion that I can render more service to the Liberal Party and the country in an independent capacity in the House of Commons.

I wish at the same time personally to thank you for the great and constant support which I have received from you in my efforts for some years to discharge an arduous and difficult duty. Your kindness, I know, is the fruit of an old and valued friendship, strengthened by the sense of an absolute agreement in our political principles and convictions.

I must beg you to regard this communication as *absolutely secret* until the public announcement is made, which must be immediately.

Yrs. vy. sincly., W. V. HARCOURT.

In this new phase of the long-drawn-out crisis Ripon

does not seem to have intervened, apparently because it was exclusively a House of Commons concern. His views, however, in which Kimberley concurred, were no secret. At first he was disposed to favour Asquith as the successor of Harcourt, but he was not very decided about it. On the other hand, he was emphatically of the opinion that the time for a Rosebery restoration had not arrived, his reason being that though Rosebery had done well on foreign politics he had remained ominously silent on domestic questions and had done nothing to conciliate Radical opinion.<sup>1</sup> When, in the New Year, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was unexpectedly elected to fill Harcourt's place, he loyally accepted the choice and rallied all his colleagues in the Lords to acquiesce in it—much to the delight and gratitude of the new Leader.<sup>2</sup>

The prospects before the Liberal Party were now relatively bright. Outside the extreme Radical Wing there was scarcely anyone who did not look forward to a return of Rosebery upon conditions which it was thought could be arranged without difficulty. Campbell-Bannerman lent himself tactfully to this view, and in the first speech he made in his new capacity sought to attenuate all possible differences between himself and his old Leader.<sup>3</sup> A new storm was, however, already brewing. The Uitlander question in the Transvaal had been under discussion between the British and Boer Governments since the Jameson Raid, but no progress towards a solution had been made. In July 1899 the negotiations took an angry turn, and in October war broke out. The effect on the Liberal Party was to create a fresh and profound schism, in which Ripon played an important, if not the decisive, rôle.

Up to the middle of 1899 he was in agreement with

<sup>1</sup> Letters to and from Kimberley, December 14 and 15, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Campbell-Bannerman, March 23, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> Note especially the reference to Home Rule in his speech at the National Liberal Club, March 22, 1899.

Chamberlain on the main lines of his South African policy, so far as he was acquainted with it. The dissent came when it was rendered clear that Chamberlain believed that Great Britain's right of intervention in the internal affairs of the Transvaal extended to the Uitlander franchise, and that he was prepared to make good that right by force of arms. Owing to the gravity of the crisis Ripon and his Front Bench colleagues patriotically abstained from any public protest, but it was not easy to preserve silence. Early in August Chamberlain claimed that his policy was identical with that pursued by his predecessor, and in support of this contention published an extract from a secret dispatch addressed by Ripon to Loch in 1893, from which it appeared that Ripon had himself sought to intervene on the Uitlander question. As a matter of fact, the form in which the extract was published gave a totally misleading idea of what had happened. Ripon explains the matter in a letter to Spencer :

*To Earl Spencer*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 18th September 1899.

MY DEAR SPENCER,— . . . I am not at all surprised that you are uneasy about the Transvaal—so am I, and things look worse to-day than they have done yet. Still, I can scarcely bring myself to believe in the possibility of war. The Uitlanders have certain definite grievances, which though they have been exaggerated are still real, but do not according to my view of the case constitute a justification for war.

It is true, as you say, that when I was Colonial Secy. I recognised the existence of these grievances and of the dangers which they created and desired to get them abated, but it never entered into my head to go to war about them. The history of my Despatch, from which

Chamberlain published an extract some time ago, is shortly this :

For some little time before Loch met Kruger to discuss various questions connected with Swaziland the latter had been preparing for some alterations in the London Convention of 1884. My Despatch contained instructions for dealing with such requests if they should be raised. I contemplated proceeding upon the *Do ut des* principle so dear to Bismarck, and trying to get something out of Kruger for the Uitlanders if I gave him something he wanted. I had little hope of success because I had so little to give, but I never thought of using threats of any kind and should not have considered myself justified in doing so. No discussion, however, on these questions took place under these instructions, as when the Convention about Swaziland was concluded Kruger said that he did not wish to raise any questions at that time, and the whole thing dropped.

Loch did more than once, I think, discuss the Uitlander complaints with Kruger, but always in a perfectly friendly spirit and without reference to the instructions contained in my Despatch. You must remember that all this was before the conspiracy and the raid, out of which to a large extent the present difficulties have arisen.

The game of bluff is, as you say, always a dangerous one. We of the Opposition have gone to the utmost, perhaps beyond it, in giving rope to the Government to play that game. If it fails the responsibility will be wholly theirs.

It seems to me impossible to conceive anything worse than Chamberlain's management of the whole of this business, and if a war with the Transvaal with all its

manifold evils is the result of his proceedings, the blame will lie heavily indeed on him.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

It will be seen that the difference of policy was fundamental, inasmuch as Ripon believed that he had no right of intervention beyond what was specifically stipulated in the Convention of 1884, and he consequently relied for a solution of the Uitlander question, not on force, but on a bargain with Kruger relating to a modification of the Convention or of what it was held to imply.

Later on another attempt was made by Chamberlain to identify Ripon with his policy, this time in regard to the supposed British suzerainty over the Transvaal. It will be remembered that in a correspondence with Kimberley in February 1895<sup>1</sup> Ripon had maintained that, although the suzerainty affirmed in the Convention of 1881 had been omitted from the Convention of 1884, and had probably been dropped, Great Britain had never formally abandoned it. This view he had incorporated in a confidential Colonial Office Minute in September 1894. While searching for some papers in the Department Chamberlain accidentally came across this Minute, and on October 18, in an unguarded wrangle with Harcourt in the House of Commons, offered to produce it. Ripon at once wrote to him protesting against the impropriety of publishing such a document, to which Chamberlain replied that he had overlooked its confidential character and that he would not proceed with his intention. "I should like to add," he wrote, "that I should most deeply regret if, as I trust has not been the case, I said anything on the spur of the moment to give you the slightest annoyance."<sup>2</sup> The view expressed in the Minute was not, in reality, as compromising for Ripon as Chamberlain had hastily imagined. Al-

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> Letters from and to Chamberlain, October 10, 13, 19 (2), and 20, 1899.

though for purposes of bargaining with Kruger and for keeping the German hand off South Africa Ripon declined to admit that the suzerainty had been abandoned, he was perfectly well aware that even as a diplomatic fiction it had ceased to exist. Indeed, in the Minute in question it was stated that the Law Officers of the Crown "inclined to the opinion that it was, in fact, tacitly abandoned in 1884."

This fairly represents the broad lines of the policy to which the Opposition Front Benches found themselves bound at the outset of the war, and Ripon's correspondence shows that they readily admitted it. It could not be otherwise, seeing that the policy had been drawn up by a Committee of the Rosebery Cabinet, consisting of Ripon, Kimberley, Acland, and Bryce, and had been sanctioned by all their colleagues.<sup>1</sup> Ripon's rôle, however, was not confined to reminding them of this fact. Throughout the war he virtually dictated and controlled every development of these fundamentals, as expounded by the official chiefs of the Opposition. He was enabled to do this, not only by his superior energy and his expert knowledge of the South African question, but because of the facile deference paid to his views by Spencer and Kimberley, and more particularly by Campbell-Bannerman, who, feeling the insecurity of his position, scarcely took any step without first seeking his advice. Many of Campbell-Bannerman's most important speeches at this period are little more than paraphrases of letters addressed to him at his request by Ripon. It was Ripon who initiated the repudiation of Chamberlain's theory of a Boer conspiracy to overthrow the British power on the ground that it was "intrinsically improbable and not established by anything in the nature of proof."<sup>2</sup> It was he again who persuaded Campbell-Bannerman to acquiesce in the annexation of the Dutch Republics, though in

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Asquith, September 24, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Loch, November 1, 1899.

regard to the Orange Free State he did so reluctantly.<sup>1</sup> It is true that he was not altogether successful in deprecating the personal attacks on Lord Milner,<sup>2</sup> and that he had no responsibility for Campbell-Bannerman's outburst on "methods of barbarism," though he found excuses for it.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he strongly insisted that after the conclusion of peace there should be no interval of Crown Colony administration between the military occupation and the grant of responsible government. This question was the subject of a letter he addressed to Campbell-Bannerman, which is typical of the spirit he sought to infuse in the official Opposition.<sup>4</sup> In November 1900 the Liberal Whips advised concessions on this and other points in order to conciliate the Liberal Imperialists. Ripon at once vetoed the suggestion :

[SECRET]

*To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 9 Nov. 1900.

MY DEAR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,—I am much obliged to you for your letter and for letting me see that from Herbert Gladstone, which I have read with much regret. . . . As you know, my attitude towards the annexation of the Dutch Republics was one of acquiescence, but, so far from implying an intention to agree without resistance to everything the Govt. may choose to do after annexation, this makes it only more strongly the duty of the Opposition to oppose anything done which may seem to them unjust or impolitic. Our objection to Crown Colony Govt. had, so far as I know, nothing to do with the person by whom that Govt.

<sup>1</sup> Letter, June 2, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Now Viscount Milner. He succeeded Hercules Robinson as High Commissioner in South Africa, and directed the Administration throughout the war.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Spencer, December 22, 1901.

<sup>4</sup> See also letter to Buxton, November 15, 1900.



might be administered. It was a serious objection on the merits, or rather the demerits, of Govt. of that kind, especially when applied to a people accustomed to self Govt. As regards Milner himself, I should deprecate any attack upon him in Parliament. Attacks upon persons serving the Country abroad are generally not acceptable to the House of Commons, and they excite individual feelings which render it impossible to arrive at a simple issue. I should hope, therefore, that you would use all your influence to deprecate an attack on Milner. But the best, if not the only way, of doing that is to challenge boldly the system of Crown Colony Govt. as applied to S. Africa without any reference, open or veiled, to the person by whom it is to be administered. . . .

To withdraw now from our opposition to Crown Colony Government in S. Africa after what has been said by you and others appears to me impossible. It would be a very poor policy, utterly unworthy of a great Party which professes to have political principles and public duties. What is recommended is that the Opposition should abdicate its functions in regard to the gravest question of the present moment—that is, to say to the Govern<sup>t</sup>, do what you like, we will wait and see how your policy turns out. We will wash our hands like Pilate, and if evil results follow we shall say to the country we are not responsible. But we shall be responsible, nevertheless—responsible for our inaction and our cowardice.

Such a policy I for one cannot support, and I must decline to incur any responsibility direct or indirect for it. In my opinion it would be better that the Liberal Party should be shattered to pieces than that its leaders should take such a course. . . .

But for you, I think, the course is plain. State your policy plainly in your coming speech, and then, when we meet before the Session to consider the line to be taken, say distinctly in the face of Asquith, Grey, Fowler, H. Gladstone, and the rest, that if you are not supported in that policy by the Party as a whole they will have to find another leader. I am pretty confident that they will shrink from the necessity.

If they do not the Party will be broken up for the moment, no doubt: to be reconstructed on the old principles, and with a clear policy suited to the new times under the leader who was ready to sacrifice to them everything except the demands of public duty.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

A comparison of this letter with Campbell-Bannerman's speech at Dundee on November 15 will show how closely he followed the advice of Ripon.

At this time the new dissensions in the Party had already become well-nigh uncontrollable. The first symptoms showed themselves at the beginning of the war. In the division on the Opposition Amendment to the Address on October 18, 1900, which criticized Chamberlain's conduct of the negotiations preceding the war, fifteen Liberal Imperialists voted with the Government. The Amendment was a logical consequence of the policy of the Opposition as inherited from the Rosebery Cabinet, but, nevertheless, it was resisted—chiefly by Roseberyites like Edward Grey, Fowler, and Haldane—on the ground that Party differences should have no part in a national crisis. The mutiny was not countenanced by Rosebery himself. Campbell-Bannerman writes to Ripon on October 27:

“ I had the greatest difficulty last week in persuading our colleagues not to make speeches in the House against

each other. Grey was, I am told, very cross about the division and went off to Glasgow to discharge his mind. Of course others will do the same. I was *very* well pleased with the division and the whole spirit of our people; and I sat next to Rosebery on Wednesday at a dinner and found that he was by no means of the opinion of Grey, Haldane & Co. He says J. Ch. should have accepted the 5 years' offer and negotiated about the conditions afterwards."

Nevertheless, Rosebery did not publicly dissociate himself from the Imperialist malcontents. He even remained on excellent terms with the official Leaders. When Campbell-Bannerman was entertained at Edinburgh on December 1 he attended the banquet, and made a speech criticizing Chamberlain's diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> During the previous month Ripon paid a long visit to him at Dalmeny, and their relations were so cordial that Ripon was more than ever persuaded that a reunited party under Rosebery was still possible.

During this visit an untoward incident happened. Ripon was seized with a severe attack of angina pectoris, which for several months kept him an invalid at Studley.<sup>2</sup> He continued, however, to keep a vigilant eye on the party activities. The threatened split continued to widen and the unacknowledged Roseberyites gained strength. In March 1900 they founded an organization of their own under the name of the Imperial Liberal Council, and on July 26 they voted forty strong with the Government against a Radical motion to reduce Chamberlain's salary. The main body of Liberals under Campbell-Bannerman remained, however, but little shaken. This was shown by the surprise "Khaki" election in September, when, in spite of the surprise and

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, December 2, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Buxton, December 13, 1899.

the reproach of pro-Boerism levelled at Campbell-Bannerman and his followers, they lost few seats :

[SECRET]

*To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 26th Oct. 1900.

MY DEAR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,—Now that the Election turmoil is over, I must take this opportunity of saying how heartily I thank you for the admirable speeches which you made while the Election was going on and for your great exertions on behalf of the Party. We ought all of us to be very grateful to you. I was also delighted with your well-deserved snub to those impertinent fellows who call themselves Liberal Imperialists. . . .

Believe me, yrs. sincerely, RIPON.

Rosebery's attitude had now become one of mysterious reserve, and Ripon began to think that it was time that a definite understanding with him was reached. He confided his views to Kimberley :

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To the Earl of Kimberley*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 13th Nov. 1900.

MY DEAR KIMBERLEY,—The pro-Rosebery intrigues are proceeding at a great pace, and I should very much like to know what you think of them.

I do not myself feel much inclined to put myself under the tutelage of Brassey and Perks, and to entrust to them the duty of selecting the person whom I am to follow, and I can hardly think that Rosebery can be so ill-advised as to have placed his cause in their hands. But his whole course since he gave up the leadership

of the Party has been so strange that it is impossible to be sure what he may or may not do. If he is to be put forward as Leader we must have some clear explanation of his policy in regard to the South African Settlement and to domestic questions, not as to details but as to the general line he would adopt. He is at present much too dark a horse for any wise man to put his money on.

I had hoped that the way in which the Party had acted together at the General Election would have produced consolidation in our ranks, and have enabled us to lay aside disputes as to the origin of the War or the diplomacy which preceded it, and to have agreed upon some common course of action for the coming Session. This hope is destroyed by the present intrigue, which will, I fear, inevitably lead to a disruption of the Party. . . .

I think the intriguers are treating C.-B. very badly, and if I were he I should resent such proceedings very strongly.

While all this wretched sort of work is going on here things are going from bad to worse in S. Africa. The state of affairs there is as bad as it can be, and when the fighting is over we shall have a desert of our own making on our hands.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

The result of this letter was that on February 8, 1901, Campbell-Bannerman had an interview with Rosebery, but it led to no result.

[PRIVATE]

*From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

6 GROSVENOR PLACE, S.W., 9 Feb. '01.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I lunched in Berkeley Square

yesterday. I should say he is not steadfast and unmoveable, but unmoveable without being steadfast. I, of course, made no proposal and used no arguments, but we discussed the situation. He appeared to me not quite to apprehend the full bearings of the S.A. question; but he saw them when we had talked the thing over, and seemed to me to sympathize.

Yours very truly, H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

During the next four months the sectional differences in the Party grew rapidly worse, and in July the Roseberyites were in open revolt. Rival demonstrations and rival dinners followed one another rapidly. The Imperial Liberal Council changed its name to the Liberal Imperial Council and elected Edward Grey as its President. The personal attacks on Campbell-Bannerman became so shrill that for a moment he was disposed to waver, but he quickly recovered himself under the influence of Ripon, who would hear nothing of surrender :

[PRIVATE]

*To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

22.6.'01.

MY DEAR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,—I cannot help troubling you with a few words to tell you how indignant I feel at the way in which Asquith and others have behaved to you. I've been long convinced that the break must come and that the pretence of union was a sham. I earnestly hope that no patched-up arrangement will be made. You may rely upon it that the majority of the Liberal Party desire your leadership on *your* lines. The Party has been reduced to impotence long enough by these divisions; better an open split than a continuance of this state of things.

5.7.'01.

I am nervous abt. a return to the *status quo ante*. We can work together on the understanding that we differ freely as to the origin of the war and the diplomacy wh. preceded its outbreak, but if we are not to have any policy as a Party about "methods of barbarism," the illegal acts of the Cape Govt., the suspension of the Cape Constitution, the terms of settlement and such-like present and future questions of first importance, we shall forfeit our position as a great National Party and become ridiculous. A split will be better than that.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

Ripon's spirit found an encouraging echo in the steadfastness of the bulk of the Party, both in Parliament and in the constituencies.

*From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

30 Oct. '01.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I was very glad to receive your letter, some words of which, applying to the Cape Colony, I quoted with good effect at Stirling. I am glad to report to you well of the general feeling in Scotland. It is a great change since last year, and last week nothing could have exceeded the friendly enthusiasm with which I was received, or the sympathy expressed even for extreme views of the war. The revolt of our "Lib. Imps."—the *Chartered Company* as I call them—has failed: the Asquith demonstration squib fizzed off the wrong way, and, for the present, things go well. But how painful to be obliged to set oneself against one's most intimate colleagues! I avoided any personal references, but the drift of all that one says is understood, and I do not see how frank co-operation can be resumed after this projected mutiny.

All my information is to the effect that our friend at Dalmeny is not with Asquith, Grey & Co., that he condemns unconditional surrender and would offer terms. Why does he not speak out, if this is so?

Yours very truly, H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

*To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

*2nd Novr. 1901.*

MY DEAR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,—I am greatly obliged to you for your very interesting letter, which gave me no little consolation. If the bulk of the Party is effectively with you the situation may yet be saved, but not on the basis of the Party, as a Party, having no opinion on South African questions in their present aspects. . . .

In short, I agree with you that frank co-operation cannot be resumed after the projected mutiny. You must take your own line and claim to be followed. I am very sorry to see that Grey has become President of the L. Imps.

What you tell me about R. is very interesting. But as you say, why then does he not speak out? If he is opposed to "unconditional surrender" he is bound to say so openly.

Yours very sincerely, RIPON.

It was not long before Rosebery did "speak out," though not quite in the limited way contemplated by Ripon and Campbell-Bannerman. On December 6 he delivered a speech at Chesterfield which was virtually a new manifesto of Liberal policy. Its dissent from the views of the official Opposition was not very marked, but it was ambiguous on Home Rule and unfriendly to Campbell-Bannerman. Ripon, while approving it in substance, swiftly recognized that its effect upon the



Party might easily be the deposition of Campbell-Bannerman as a propitiatory sacrifice for reunion, and he resented it with all the strength of his keen sense of loyalty. He writes to Spencer :<sup>1</sup>

“ The mode in which R. treats C.-B. is to me most unsatisfactory and, as you say, ungenerous, and I am afraid that we must see in it a readiness to back up the intrigues of Haldane & Co. I take it that at this moment their foremost wish is to get rid of C.-B., and that they would for the present swallow a good deal of real Liberalism if they could accomplish that object. This, it seems to me, we must firmly resist. C.-B. under almost unparalleled difficulties has done excellent work for the Party. His recent speeches, especially at Plymouth, as you say, have been excellent, and we must stand by him.”

The speech was welcomed by the Liberal Imperialists as an act of Leadership and a call to battle, and the gossips in the newspapers had many piquant stories to tell of fresh quarrels among the Liberal chiefs. What had actually happened was, however, little known. Campbell-Bannerman throws light upon it in the following letter :

[SECRET]

*From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

LORD WARDEN HOTEL, DOVER, 31st Dec. 1901.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I have been burning to write to you for some days. . . . I need not say that I have no responsibility for all that has appeared in any paper, nor have I any idea, so far as the truth has been told affecting my part in the matter, how that has got out.

<sup>1</sup> December 22, 1901.

The main facts are two.

1. I went to see R. and I had an hour's talk with him. I asked him flatly what he meant. He agrees that there is substantial harmony in our views on the war. He says there is a strong case against the "methods" as impolitic, though he does not admit barbarism. He said, "I believe I could make peace to-morrow: I have reasons for saying so." Will he, then, consult and co-operate with us? No, impossible: left the Party five years ago. "Am not, in ecclesiastical phrase, in communion with you." Ireland would be quite enough to bar the way. Is against H.R. in any shape or form. Used all the familiar Unionist arguments.

That is all that was material as to his relations with the party. I also attacked the "clean slate" and "shibboleths" and "efficiency," &c., &c., as being either idle phrases or implying a renunciation of Liberalism. He made explanations.

2. R. has written to Spencer refusing to rejoin and advising continuance of present arrangements in H. of L., i.e. Spencer lieutenant to K. *cum jure successionis*.<sup>1</sup>

So there we are—and the country has been led to believe that a noble patriot is being kept out of a beneficent public life by a knot of jealous curmudgeons! I told him that that was the effect of what he had done.

Then comes Grey. He has written to Herbert G. that R.'s patriotic line is his: that it counters me on—

- (a) Charges of cruelty;
- (b) Offer of terms;
- (c) Martial law;
- (d) Milner.

<sup>1</sup> During Kimberley's illness in 1901-2 Spencer acted for him, and on his death in April 1902 Spencer was elected to succeed him on the proposal of Ripon.

These are four vital points, and unless I renounce my views on this he abjures my leadership. How tragic it is, he says, to think what the Party might have been and done if it had taken "the R. point of view" and kept clear of "the anti-national tone." Much more to this effect. . . .

The way in which many of our stalwarts, even, have jumped down R.'s throat is rather startling. I suspect it is a real yearning for unity and a recognition of his value as an asset, rather than real acceptance of his eccentric acts and words. Let us hope so.

May I offer from my wife and myself our best wishes to Lady Ripon and yourself for the New Year. I am afraid in public life there is poor prospect of anything good.

Yours very truly, H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

In his reply Ripon wrote :

"There is no more to be done. He must go his own way and we must go ours, helping him if we can do anything for peace, but maintaining our own full independence under yr. leadership."<sup>1</sup>

For a few weeks it looked as if the long-threatened split had come. A new dissenting organization was started under the name of the Liberal League, and Rosebery became its President. There was much defiant talk of "definite separation," and Rosebery wrote to the *Times* that he was outside Campbell-Bannerman's "tabernacle, but not alone."<sup>2</sup> But once again the great majority of the Liberal Party closed their ranks round Campbell-Bannerman, and the secessionists, thrown back upon themselves, hastened

<sup>1</sup> January 3, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, February 21, 1902.

to explain that they meant no harm. When, in the following May, the war came to an end Liberal Imperialism, in its schismatic form, found the reason for its being gone. There was a gradual recoalescence in which even Harcourt and Morley participated. On November 20 Buxton reports to Ripon that both Harcourt and Grey were present at an ex-Cabinet meeting held on that day and that "all were most amiable and harmonious."

As long, however, as Rosebery remained outside and the Liberal Leadership continued to be unfilled, there was always a rallying point for possible malcontents. This Ripon felt, and he watched eagerly for an opportunity of completing the work of Liberal reunion by restoring Rosebery to the Leadership. He thought he had found one when in May 1903 Chamberlain startled the whole country with his profession of faith in Imperial Tariff Preferences, Retaliation, and even Protection. In a number of letters to his Party colleagues Ripon adjured them to buckle on their armour against this revival of the old fiscal heresy, but, at the same time, he kept his eye on the possibilities of the new fight as a means of bringing back Rosebery. His attitude on both these questions is well illustrated by a letter he wrote to Spencer :

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To Earl Spencer*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 30 *May*, 1903.

MY DEAR SPENCER,—We are in for a fight now. It is the greatest political struggle of the last 50 years. I shall be down here for a few days more, as I have an important engagement in connection with the University question on Wednesday, but shall go to London at the end of next week, when we will talk the whole matter over. In the meantime I want to ask you whether

you think anything can be done to induce Rosebery loyally to join us on this issue. Chamberlain's proceedings seem to me in the highest degree mischievous from an Imperialist point of view. Nothing can completely remedy the mischief which he has already done. If we at home reject this scheme, as I earnestly hope we shall, the Colonies will be alienated and disgusted. If it is accepted now they will be jubilant for the moment, but when the inevitable reaction comes and the people of Great Britain and Ireland refuse to be taxed and starved for the supposed benefit of the Colonies, the danger of a real breach with those dependencies will be very great indeed. If Rosebery could be got to take that view he might fall naturally and consistently into line with us. The crisis is so grave that no self-respecting public men can decently hold aloof. There is a great opening for R. Let him throw himself into this battle and with his eloquence and his talents he may come out of it our unquestioned leader. I would follow anybody, I would unite with anybody, who would take the right side now. That the great interests of State should be sacrificed to personal considerations and individual selfishness is intolerable. This is no mere party question. It is a vast question of national policy. We *must* unite, and towards that union the first step is to get hold of Rosebery.

Yours ever, RIFON.

Chamberlain's "Fiscal Reform" agitation, as it was called, proved a blessing in disguise for the Liberal Party. It not only strengthened the unifying tendencies already at work and gave a new practical significance to one of the supreme tests of Liberal orthodoxy, but it supplied the whole party with the dynamic power of a real enthusiasm for a great principle superior to all personal

questions. From that moment the Liberal League became little more than an unhappy memorial of a lifeless controversy, though there were still a few of its members who sulked over the old personal issues. Even in the domain of Imperialism it was, as Ripon had pointed out, eclipsed by the Radical Free Traders, who, in their resistance to the new fiscal policy, were to no small extent animated by the conviction that they were serving the cause of Imperial harmony and unity. Without any formal reconciliation all sections of the party now fought as one host under the banner of Free Trade. Within a fortnight of their first promulgation Chamberlain's plans were denounced from the platform by Liberals of every shade—Spencer, Rosebery, Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith, Bryce, Edward Grey, Harcourt, Fowler, and Morley. At last the Party spoke with one voice. Throughout the country the spirit of Liberals revived, and there was a general feeling that the Party had come by its own again. But this was not all. While Liberalism gained strength and unity from Chamberlain's agitation, the Unionists were cleft in twain by it. Efforts were made to hide their dissensions and to suppress them, but in vain, and throughout 1904 and 1905 the Cabinet and the Party presented a spectacle of discord and confusion which recalled the worst days of Rosebery's Cabinet and all the Liberal polemics which succeeded it during the war.

Towards the end of 1905 the situation of the Cabinet became unendurable. Chamberlain had captured the machinery of the Liberal Unionist Party, and had resigned office in order to stampede the country into a renunciation of Free Trade. Other Ministers, Conservative as well as Unionist, had also resigned, and it was clear that the days of the Government were numbered. Would they dissolve or would they resign, and if they resigned should the Liberals accept the task of forming a Cabinet in spite of their being in a minority in the House of Commons? On this important question

Campbell-Bannerman hastened, as usual, to take counsel with Ripon.

[PRIVATE]

*From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

BELMONT CASTLE, MEIGLE, SCOTLAND, 25 Nov. '05.

MY DEAR RIPON,—Many of our people appear to be impressed with the disadvantages of accepting office after a resignation. Any one can see that there would be inconvenience, and that as a mere move in the party game it would be clever to refuse.

But it seems to me that these inconveniences would be outweighed by the damping effect on our fighting men throughout the country, when after all our clamour we invited the Gov. to retain office. They know nothing of tricks or pedantries and judge by facts: and the fact would be that we declined to undertake responsibilities which we had been asking for through these years.

Then, if our refusal postponed the Election, however little, we sh<sup>d</sup> be blamed for a spoiled Session, when by pluckily undertaking office we should have time to prepare for a full Session.

I should very much like to have your mind. The option may not come to us, but it is well to be prepared.

Yours very truly, H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

Herbert G. seems strong for refusing.

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 29 Novr. 1905.

MY DEAR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,—Your letter of the 25th has only reached me this morning. I now hasten to reply to it.

I need scarcely say that I have been thinking a good deal during the last few days about the question to which it refers. You would, I think, be *justified* in refusing to take office on a mere resignation, but on the abstract merits of the case I am not inclined to recommend that course. It seems to me that it would be a little inconsistent with a great deal of the language which we have been using for many months, and it might open the door to farther intanglements even worse than those with which we have now to deal.

It must be remembered that a refusal on your part to take office on Balfour's<sup>1</sup> resignation would not necessarily involve his resumption of the Government; the King would be perfectly entitled on your refusal to send, not for Balfour, but for Lansdowne or Chamberlain. I do not suppose that the former would attempt to carry on Balfour's Government without Balfour, but Chamberlain might very likely be tempted to make a Cabinet of his own. He would probably like to have been Prime Minister even for a few weeks; he is a better master of tactics than B. and would do quite as well, I should think, at a General Election, and if he had been Prime Minister he would *ipso facto* oust B. of the leadership of the Unionist Party and become head of the Opposition in the new Parliament, a position which would suit him very well. It would not be safe for you to overlook the possibility of such a contingency. I have said above that "on the abstract merits of the case" I should not advise you to refuse Office now. By those words I meant to reserve the case of there being a strong and general feeling in the Liberal Party in favour of your refusing. If that were the case it

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour had succeeded to the Premiership on Lord Salisbury's retirement from public life in 1902.



would alter the situation materially. Two courses being open to you, it would probably be unwise to adopt the one to which the body of the Party was opposed. This is a matter on which you are much more able to form a judgment than I can be. From what I have seen in the newspapers I should have thought that the feeling against taking office at the present moment on Balfour's resignation was strong—and from what you say that seems to be H. Gladstone's view. But, on the other hand, you say that you think that our fighting men would dislike and would not understand a refusal. If so, I see no ground for your taking that step. It must also be recollected that the game of refusal is one that you cannot play twice over. If Balfour on your refusal resumes office, meets Parliament, and is beaten on the Address or any other question and resigns again instead of dissolving, I do not see how you could again refuse to make a Govt. I do not think that it would be fair either to the country or to the King to do so. H.M. might justly complain that you were leaving him in the lurch, and might conceive a strong dislike to the Liberals in consequence. Now this, of course, would not prevent their return to Office in the future, but it would make their tenure of office much less smooth and pleasant than it would otherwise be. It is desirable to start well with the King—monarchs are very apt to be influenced by personal feelings. Besides which I do not believe that you can force Balfour to dissolve if he is determined not to do so.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

And so it was decided.

Meanwhile the question of who should be the new Liberal Premier in the event of the resignation of the

Government, and with it the long-pending question of Rosebery's relations to the Party, had solved itself.

Early in the same month, when it was thought that a dissolution would take place, Campbell-Bannerman had consulted Ripon as to the party programme to be placed before the country during the election.<sup>1</sup> The results of these conversations are not recorded, but they may be gathered from the evidently well-considered speeches of Campbell-Bannerman during the ensuing three weeks. In the most important of these speeches, which was delivered at Stirling on November 23, he virtually affirmed the continued fidelity of the Party to Home Rule. In view of what followed it has been suggested that this was a thoughtless and maladroit impromptu.<sup>2</sup> There is reason for believing that this was not the case. Ripon, who for twenty years had been a strong Home Ruler, and throughout the Leadership crisis, as we have seen, stood unyieldingly for the integral Liberal tradition as inherited from 1886, could scarcely have failed to insist upon Home Rule in his conferences with Campbell-Bannerman. This inference is strengthened by the fact that only a month before he had advised Sir Antony Macdonnell, the "Devolution" Irish Under-Secretary, who was in difficulties with his Chief, not to resign his office, on the ground that, with the early advent of a Liberal Cabinet, Home Rule would be safe.<sup>3</sup> However, that may be, the result of the Stirling speech was to bring up again in an acute form the fundamental difference between the Party and Rosebery. On the Home Rule question Rosebery had always been consistent, and so far as his Liberal colleagues were concerned had never disguised his opinions. He lost no time in replying to the Stirling speech. On November 25 at Bodmin he vehemently repudiated Home Rule and declared that he "never would serve under that banner." Happily,

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Campbell-Bannerman, November 7, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xxiii, p. 733.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from and to Macdonnell, October 6 and 9, 1903.

the danger of a split no longer existed. The whole Party were practically united, not only by Free Trade and Home Rule, but also by the eagerness and hopefulness with which they were looking forward to their long last emergence from the wilderness of squalid strife and impotent opposition in which they had spent ten weary years. Rosebery returned to his "lonely furrow"—this time practically alone.

The Balfour Cabinet resigned on December 4, and the King at once sent for Campbell-Bannerman. Any possibility of choice in the matter had been removed by the death of Harcourt in the previous November, and by the serious illness of Spencer, which had entailed his retirement from public life. Campbell-Bannerman thus succeeded to the full Leadership, which had been vacant since Rosebery's resignation in 1896. The formation of the new Cabinet proved a relatively easy task. With only two exceptions the Liberal Imperialists accepted the offices offered to them without condition or demur. Even before Campbell-Bannerman set out on his task Asquith had declared that he associated himself with the programme announced in the Stirling speech.<sup>1</sup> The unbending Imperialists were Grey and Haldane. At first they both declined the offers made to them, and as Campbell-Bannerman now felt himself sufficiently strong to refuse all concessions, their exclusion seemed certain. Happily, at the last moment, Acland undertook the task of persuading them, and on the morning of December 7 both agreed to enter the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup>

Ripon, who was now in his seventy-eighth year, was anxious for rest, but his reputation as a Moderate and his long experience of affairs were indispensable to the new Cabinet, and he consented to serve for a limited period as Lord Privy Seal and Leader in the Lords.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from J. W. Willans, November 27, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Letters from and to Acland, December 15, 19, 22, and 25, 1905.

## CHAPTER XXV

### LAST YEARS IN OFFICE

(1905—1908)

THE high hopes of the new Government were splendidly fulfilled by the General Election in January 1906. The country was swept by a tornado of Liberal victories, which gave the new Premier a majority of 190 over Conservatives, Liberal Unionists, and Nationalists combined. Long before the results were known the Cabinet were busy with their preparations for the new Session, and when Parliament met in February a prodigious programme of Liberal reforms was outlined in the King's Speech.

The work which fell upon Ripon as Leader in the Lords was in a sense heavier than that of any other Cabinet Minister. The Government Leader in the Upper House has practically the same scope of work as the Prime Minister in the Commons, but he has to deal with it under greater difficulties, though not under the same burden and strain of responsibility. It is true that he has a number of colleagues among whom the departmental work is distributed, but they do not ease his labours in the same degree as Ministers in the Commons ease the labours of the Premier. Being for the most part at the outset of their political careers they have to be coached and controlled by their Chief, who, in addition, has to assume charge of all large questions of departmental policy which, in the Lower House, are generally dealt with by the Ministers responsible for them.<sup>1</sup> A special difficulty of a Liberal Leader in the Lords is that he leads a permanent minority which at once restricts his choice of colleagues, and imposes upon

<sup>1</sup> See letter of Ripon to the Prime Minister, February 6, 1906.

him an uphill fight requiring exceptional resources of tactics, vigilance, and good temper. Despite these embarrassments Ripon threw himself into the work with an enthusiasm and energy which apparently took no account of his weight of years. The result was that early in March he was prostrated by a recurrence of his old heart trouble, and for a week or two there was a serious question of his retirement from the Government.<sup>1</sup> Happily he recovered, and with the assistance of Lord Crewe,<sup>2</sup> who undertook to act as his lieutenant, he resumed his labours.

Even thus relieved his record during the two Sessions of 1906 was remarkable. His speeches fill some 120 columns of *Hansard*, and deal with an unusually wide range of subjects. This will be seen from the following list of Bills on which he spoke :

- Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill.
- Poisons and Pharmacy Bill.
- Police Superannuation Bill.
- Reserve Forces Bill.
- Electric Lighting Bill.
- Finance Bill.
- Metropolitan Police Commission Bill.
- Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Bill.
- Labourers (Ireland) Bill.
- Deanery of Manchester Bill.
- Crown Lands Bill.
- Sale of Intoxicating Liquors (Ireland) Bill.
- Plural Voting Bill.
- Town Tenants (Ireland) Bill.
- Land Tenure Bill.
- Merchant Shipping Acts (Amendment) Bill.
- Licensing Bill.
- Workmen's Compensation Bill.
- Land Tax Commissioners Bill.
- Education Bill.

<sup>1</sup> Letters to and from Campbell-Bannerman, March 3 (2) and 4, 1906

<sup>2</sup> Marquess of Crewe, then Lord President of the Council.

Besides all this he initiated or took part in important debates on the general policy of the Government, Local Taxation, Justices of the Peace, Imperial Defence, the New Army Scheme, and the Transvaal Constitution. Some additional burdens were cast upon him by the Premier's frequent spells of ill-health. When these happened he had to preside at Cabinet Councils,<sup>1</sup> and on one occasion they left in his hands the responsible task of responding for the Government at the annual Guildhall Banquet.<sup>2</sup> Of all this work he acquitted himself so well that something like a new spirit of enthusiasm began to manifest itself in the thin ranks of his followers in the Lords. "You are indeed a Chief to be proud of," wrote Lord Carrington<sup>3</sup> to him after he succeeded in carrying the Land Tenure Bill through the Cabinet.

His most important work during the year was performed in connexion with the abortive Education Bill, which was the chief measure in the new Government's programme. Ever since his entry into the Roman Catholic Church Educational legislation had caused him peculiar perplexities. This was due to the difficulty of reconciling the views of the Catholic Episcopate with those of the Liberal Party, and both with his own attachment to moderate denominationalism. These perplexities had been raised in a very acute form by the Tory Bill of 1902. He regarded it as unjust to the Nonconformists and of very dubious advantage to his own co-religionists, and consequently he refused to speak or to vote on it.<sup>4</sup> The Bill of 1906 had, in its denominational incidence, been the subject of various compromises between himself and Birrell,<sup>5</sup> the new

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Campbell-Bannerman, April 27, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, Nov. 10, 1906. Letter from Campbell-Bannerman, Nov. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Carrington, June 27, 1906. He was then President of the Board of Agriculture. Created Marquess of Lincolnshire in 1912.

<sup>4</sup> Letters to Spencer (Nov. 22, 1902), Norfolk (Dec. 6, 1902), and Scrope (June 9, 1903).

<sup>5</sup> Augustine Birrell was President of the Board of Education from 1905 to 1907, when he became Chief Secretary for Ireland.

President of the Board of Education, and he was disposed to regard it in substance as a reasonable measure. Nevertheless, it was hotly denounced by the Roman Catholic Bishops, and Ripon himself suffered much painful obloquy at the hands of his co-religionists. How undeserved this was is shown by a private letter from Archbishop Bourne, written at the height of the hubbub, in which he frankly admits the wisdom of his attitude.<sup>1</sup>

When the Bill came up to the Lords Ripon moved the second reading in one of the best speeches he ever made.<sup>2</sup>

*From Earl Carrington to Lady Ripon*

53 PRINCE'S GATE, S.W., 3rd August, 1906.

MY DEAR LADY RIPON,—I must write you a line of congratulation on Lord Ripon's speech to-night. It was admirable in every way, and it is universally acknowledged as such, and do let me add a line to say how proud we all are to serve under him as a leader; and to express the affection and confidence we all have in him as our Leader in the Lords. I dined at Brooks' to-night with the Lord Chancellor and Sandhurst, and it was quite touching to hear the way they spoke of him—in words that were most thoroughly deserved. I only hope he is not over-tired to-night.

Forgive my bothering you with this; but I could not go to bed without sending you one little line.

Yours very sincerely, CARRINGTON.

*From Lord Ribblesdale to Lady Ripon*

GISBURNE PARK, CLITHEROE, 7th August, 1906.

MY DEAR LADY RIPON,—I must write and tell you how much we all admire and value Lord Ripon's leadership

<sup>1</sup> See correspondence with the Archbishop, May 4, 25, and 26, and with Scrope, May 11 and 13, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, ser. iv, vol. clxii, pp. 1562-72.

of the party in the House of Lords, and this respect and admiration are abundantly shared by the Opposition. No writing paper—except perhaps the stationery in Brobdignag—could suffice me to tell you the nice things I've heard from their side and our own which have given me pleasure, and which I wish I could transmit to you in their actual wording—but anyhow I can give you their spirit.

As to Lord R.'s speech on the Education Bill, I think it ranks with that of the Archbishop, and in its kind with the Bishop of Birmingham's, which to my mind seemed the most interesting and cogent speeches in the Debate. At the same time Lord Ripon speaks from heights of experience of the conducting of affairs which no other man in the House possesses, and this gives a quality to such a speech as that he made on Friday night which is quite particular and removed from what other people, however able and eloquent, have to say. He is, as it were, *hors concours*.

With love to Lord Ripon,

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

RIBBLESDALE.

Among the letters received by Ripon himself none gave him greater pleasure than the following :

*From the Earl of Cromer*

20 MANSFIELD STREET, W., 4th August, 1906.

MY DEAR LORD RIPON,—I hope you will not mind my saying that I listened to your excellent speech yesterday evening with the greatest interest and sympathy ; all the more so as I feel that in all these discussions your personal position must have been one of very considerable difficulty. I was particularly glad to note



that advancing years had not in any way diminished your powers in debate.

It is a great pity that others will not do as you have done, and set aside their own personal religious opinions, which really, from the point of view of the politician, have but little to do with the matter. Personally, I do not much like the Bill ; indeed, I have found very few people who do like it. I hope it will be amended. On the other hand, I am so convinced that if a settlement is not made we shall end in secular education—to which I am much opposed—that I think it is worth while making many sacrifices to obviate this consummation. The weak part of the argument seems to me to be that even after the sacrifices have been made, there may be no settlement. If the Church of England people take the place of the “ passive resister,” we shall be not much better off than we are now.

I am deeply convinced of the validity of your arguments about the Cowper-Temple teaching. Whatever may be its defects, it is very much better than no religious teaching at all ; and moreover, as a general system, it is the only platform on which there is the least hope of uniting the various shades of opinion which exist in this country.

Had it not been that I think it a mistake for permanent officials to take part in these discussions, I should have been much tempted to say something of this sort myself.

Very sincerely yours, CROMER.

In the Committee stage of the Bill, which occupied the larger part of the Autumn Session, Ripon fought stoutly and with inexhaustible tact and good temper to save it. It was to no avail. The Opposition amended

the Bill out of all recognition, and although in the last stages, when the two Houses were in conflict, Ripon, with the support of Birrell, framed compromise after compromise, nothing came of them, and the Bill was lost.<sup>1</sup>

*To Augustine Birrell*

9 CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, S.W., 20th December, 1906.

MY DEAR BIRRELL,—We have lost the Bill, and the situation created by its rejection is a very serious one. But to say that is not the object of my writing to you. I want to express to you, if you will permit me to do so, my high sense of the ability, judgement, temper, and patience which you have unceasingly displayed in the management of this most difficult business. The failure of the Bill must be a great disappointment to you. But your conduct of it has made your reputation in Parliament and in the country, and has won for you the confidence and high regard of all your colleagues, who did not know you before, and of none more completely than yours most sincerely,

RIPON.

P.S.—I must add that I am especially grateful to you for your invariable kindness and consideration for me personally. My position has been a difficult one, but for you it would probably have been an impossible one.

The following year, 1907, was darkened for Ripon by the greatest sorrow of his life. On the last day of February his wife died after a long illness. They had been married for fifty-five years, and during the whole of that time had been devotedly attached to one

<sup>1</sup> Ripon's activity during the Committee stage of the Bill is illustrated by the following references in *Hansard*: vol. clxiv, pp. 77-8, 271-3, 685, 949, 991-2, 1411-13, 1422; vol. clxv, pp. 361-2; vol. clxvi, pp. 249, 454-6; vol. clxvii, pp. 937, 1152-3, 1370-4, 1412-16.



*T. and E. Cox, Ripon.*

THE MARCHIONESS OF RIPON (*circa* 1900)



another. From the earliest days of their married life Lady Ripon had identified herself with all the varying phases of her husband's public career. Tom Hughes recalls in one of his letters to her the first time he met her. It was at a Council of War on the eve of the great Engineers' strike in 1852. "You were lying on a sofa in Carlton Gardens library and Goderich was sitting at the head of the sofa talking to Newton and some other man about the strike which was threatening."<sup>1</sup> Fifty-six years later we have another glimpse of her still eager interest in her husband's work in a letter from Lady Harcourt.<sup>2</sup> "When this [the Campbell-Bannerman] Government was formed *She* told me that she was 'as pleased as a child' to have you still in office." Ripon's letters bear countless testimonies to the great reliance he placed on her advice and judgement. Outside her family circle she was widely known and beloved as a hostess of singular sweetness and charm, and a friend of infinite sympathy and generosity. Gladstone was never tired of singing her praises, and Arthur Helps once wrote from Hughenden that there was one point on which he and Dizzy entirely agreed, "namely, in admiring Lady Ripon."<sup>3</sup> The chief of her public activities were reserved for her native West Riding, where she was adored. She was President of the Girls' Home at Ripon, Trustee of the local Nursing Funds, and President of the Women's Liberal Association, and of the Ripon branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. During the last few months of her life she was unable to endure the noise of London, and as she was anxious that her husband should not be taken from his political duties, she persuaded him to rent for her a villa at Wimbledon.<sup>4</sup> To the last she followed his political activities with as much affection and pride as

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hughes, October 29, 1860. Cf. *supra*, Vol. I, pp. 27-9.

<sup>2</sup> October 10, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Helps to Ripon, August 24, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> Ripon to Emily Hobhouse, August 28, 1906.

when she helped him to win his first election in Hull. She had remained a member of the Church of England, and on March 6 she was laid to rest in the private memorial church of St. Mary which had been built in the Park at Studley in memory of her brother, who was murdered by Greek brigands in 1870.

This blow, added to the weight of his eighty years, turned Ripon's mind once more to thoughts of retirement.

*To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 10th March, 1907.

MY DEAR C.-B.,—I have always felt that no man, unless he were a Gladstone, ought to have anything to do with the management of public affairs after he reached the age of 80. I shall reach that age next October, and I therefore have intended to write to you as that time approached to ask you to relieve me from my present duties at the end of this Summer Session. But now in my changed circumstances it seems to me that it would be better not only for myself, but for you and the Government also, if I were to withdraw now instead of taking up work again for a few months which will elapse between now and next August. To me this would be a great relief, and you can have no difficulty in filling up my place as leader in the House of Lords, for Crewe proved himself in last Session to be perfectly fit for the post and obtained a hold on the House on *both* sides which would make him a thoroughly good leader.

But it may be possible that you may not like a change in the middle of the Session, and may wish me to go on till the end of the Summer. If so, I leave myself in your hands and will do my best, though I fear that I shall be found little fit for the work that probably lies

before us in the House of Lords—for though I am well in bodily health I am old and battered, and good, as it seems to me, for nothing but the quiet that should precede the grave.

I shall be glad to know as soon as I can what your wishes are.

Ever yours most sincerely, RIPON.

*From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, S.W., 12th March, 1907.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I was alarmed by the earlier portion of your letter, in which you gave reasons, which I cannot deny are forcible, for contemplating some relief from your public duties in connection with the Government. But the latter part of it reassured me, and I breathed again. I am deeply sensible of the sacrifices you have already made, and I owe you more than any one can know on account of the uncomplaining devotion which has kept you at your post in such trying circumstances. But gratitude for the past only whets my appetite for your help in the future. I most earnestly hope that you will remain among us, setting an example, keeping us to principles when we are tempted to stray, and by your wise and kindly spirit winning the affectionate admiration of all around you. That you are willing to go on with all the drudgery and worry is splendid, and I gratefully accept your proposal to let things go on, on the present footing, for this Session at least.

I really cannot express my deep obligation to you.

Yours very sincerely, H. C.-B.

Ripon thereupon agreed to go on to the end of the Summer Session.<sup>1</sup> His zest for work, however, speedily

<sup>1</sup> To Campbell-Bannerman, March 13, 1907.

revived, and it was not until the autumn of the following year that he finally doffed his harness, and then, not on account of his age or infirmities, but of a difference with his colleagues which might have happened at any time.<sup>1</sup> To the end, indeed, he showed little sign of the waning powers of which he had complained in his last letter to the Prime Minister. His correspondence with Crewe during the whole of this period shows an undiminished grasp of all the details of the work of the Leadership in the Lords, and his activity in the House even moved Fitzmaurice to congratulate him on the renewal of his youth :

*From Lord Fitzmaurice*

26A NORTH AUDLEY STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE, W.

22nd November, 1907.

DEAR LORD RIPON,—I was glad to hear the other day that you were quite well—and indeed younger than ever. But you are only acting according to precedent ; for was not Lord Winchelsea Lord Privy Seal in the first Nottingham Cabinet in 1765–66, and enjoying the same perpetual youth at exactly the same age as yourself. I have no doubt he would have led the House had not the old Duke of Newcastle got in the way somewhere.

Believe me, yours sincerely, FITZMAURICE.

What especially stimulated Ripon's political appetite at this time was Morley's Indian Reform Scheme,<sup>2</sup> which first took shape while he was still in mourning at Studley. He had long looked forward to it as the fulfilment of much of what he could only dream when he was pursuing his own reforming career in India. On March 31 Morley sent him the first summary of the proposals agreed upon by him and Lord Minto,<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Morley was Indian Secretary in the new Cabinet. He was created Viscount Morley of Blackburn in 1908, retaining his office.

<sup>3</sup> Earl of Minto. Was appointed Governor-General of India by the Unionist Government in 1905. Cf. Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii, pp. 199–290.



Viceroy. "It opens formidable questions," he wrote, "on which the Cabinet will presently look to you for hints."<sup>1</sup> Ripon found them more formidable than he had expected. His idea, as he wrote to Wedderburn in the previous June,<sup>2</sup> was a somewhat slower process—"first the reform of the Legislative Council, then the admission of some Indians to the Secretary of State's Council at home, and if that worked well, as I fully believe it would, to the Viceroy's Executive Council in India." Morley's scheme, however, provided for an Indian member of the Executive Council right off, and to this Ripon was disposed to demur. Still, on the whole, he approved the draft, mainly on the ground that the combination of Minto and Morley pledged both parties in the State to the cause of Reform, and that it would be imprudent to do or say anything which might tend to weaken so auspicious a combination.<sup>3</sup>

Later on he came into conflict with Morley on another phase of the Indian question. While the reforms were still on the anvil grave unrest manifested itself in India. Seditious activity in the press and on the platform was followed by a series of daring dynamite outrages. The Government of India proposed stern repressive measures restricting free speech and the freedom of the press, and these were sanctioned by Morley, without, however, abating in any way his scheme of reforms. Ripon took exception both in the Cabinet and in private letters to Morley to the unnecessarily wide scope of these measures, and especially to their permanent character.<sup>4</sup> The result was that they were slightly modified, but in India their effect, even as they stood, proved mischievous in an unexpected way. They enabled the agitators to preach distrust of Morley's sincerity as a reformer, and moderate men began to

<sup>1</sup> March 3, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> June 6, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Letters to and from Morley, April 1, 5, and 7, 1907.

<sup>4</sup> Morley, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 235, 260. Letters to Morley, October 17, 21, and 25, 1907.

fear that as a result the whole reform scheme would be discredited. In these circumstances a very striking appeal was made to Ripon. Gopal Gokhale, the ex-President of the Indian National Congress, who was then in England, wrote to Wedderburn, begging of him to persuade Ripon to save Morley's reforms by vouching them in a speech in the House of Lords.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his letter he said :

“ My countrymen's faith in him [Morley] has been more than shaken. They do not realise, as you and I here do, how great his difficulties have been and how he has been struggling against them. But their faith in Lord Ripon and their love and reverence for him are still as great as ever. Even those who are ready to denounce almost every Englishman indiscriminately speak of Lord Ripon in terms of respect. And he is the one Englishman from whom the bulk of the educated classes in India will to-day stand advice, and what he says will not be suspected of proceeding from any motive except a sincere desire for their welfare. Now, if Lord Ripon will say three things, they will, I think, have a good effect in India, and that will not fail to strengthen Lord Morley's position. First, a condemnation of physical violence as paralysing the friends of reform, secondly an exhortation to Indians not to lose heart or grow unduly impatient, as constitutional reform is always a long, slow, weary process, and thirdly an assurance (it may be delicately given in the form of a tribute to Lord Morley) that they could not have a better friend of their reasonable aspirations in power than Lord Morley. If Lord Ripon says these things *after* Lord Morley has made his intentions about reform clear, they will practically be a message of hope from him to the

<sup>1</sup> June 29, 1908.

people of India, and I fully expect that nothing but good will come of it.

“The present situation is most anxious, and every day the sky is growing darker. The greatest need of the hour is a genuine and sustained effort to bring back the faith of educated India in the good intentions of the rulers, and no Englishman’s word will go as far in this direction as Lord Ripon’s.”

How Ripon responded to this appeal will be told presently.<sup>1</sup>

It was not only in familiar political fields such as Education and India that he laboured at this period. One of the surprises of his octogenarian activities was the interest he displayed in foreign politics and the mastery he acquired of all the grave international problems which were then beginning to agitate Europe. He seemed to scent from afar the colossal tempest which was destined to overwhelm the civilized world seven years later. With the exception of the Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, he was the only member of the Cabinet who endeavoured to secure adequate consideration for these portentous questions. The result was a close alliance between the two men, in which also Fitzmaurice, then Foreign Under-Secretary,<sup>2</sup> participated. Ripon had learnt during his tenure of the Colonial Office to appreciate the danger of German ambitions and more especially of the unstable character of the German Emperor.<sup>3</sup> This was the point of departure of all his ideas on foreign policy, and it led him to approve the various important measures adopted by Grey with a view to neutralizing the German danger. He was especially anxious to fortify the Entente with

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, pp. 311-15.

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Fitzmaurice, brother of Lord Lansdowne, raised to the Peerage in 1905. Entered the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy in 1908.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, pp. 228-9, 230-4.

France, of which he had been an advocate in the darkest days of Anglo-French misunderstandings. The Morocco crisis and the Algeciras Conference gave particular point to his predilection in this respect. On the other hand it involved him in some perplexity owing to his traditional Radical dislike of "entangling alliances."

.      *To Lord Fitzmaurice*

9 CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, S.W., 11th January 1906.

MY DEAR FITZMAURICE,—I am very grateful for the large amount of information which I receive from the F.O. I think the Department treats me very well. One cannot help being anxious about the Morocco business—I am sorry, though not surprised, to hear that you think the Germans intend to make the Conference a failure. That a European War should arise out of the matter seems almost impossible, but when one has to do with a potentate like the German Emperor one can feel no real security. One of his principal objects is, I imagine, to break down the Entente Cordiale and separate us from France, and I have some fear that he may succeed in doing that. Our engagements with France are, as I understand, confined to the promise of full *diplomatic* support, and I have no doubt that the French Government understand that we are bound to nothing beyond that. But there are indications, I think, both in the newspapers and in such private conversations as Clemenceau's talk with Lister, for example, which seems to show that the French people and many of their public men are expecting support of another kind, if the Conference breaks down, and serious trouble with Germany arises. If that occurs and we decline, as I think we ought to decline, to go farther than diplomacy will reach, I cannot but fear a cry of "perfidie Albion" and a destruction of the present friendship

between the two nations. The situation requires great wariness, but we may trust Grey for that.

Yours very sincerely, RIPON.

The dilemma indicated in this letter was not solved until seven years later, when, by a secret exchange of Notes with France, Great Britain virtually agreed to come to her armed assistance in the event of an unprovoked attack on her by a third Power.<sup>1</sup> Ripon had then been dead three years, but it is not unreasonable to conjecture that he would have heartily supported this Agreement had he still been alive and in office.

In the negotiation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which completed the Triple Entente, Ripon also took an active part. Here his Indian experience qualified him to speak with authority, and the Afghan and Persian sections of the Convention owed much to his wise counsel.<sup>2</sup> He was not enamoured of Russia and was under no illusions as to her political ideas and methods. He also shared with Fitzmaurice a very justifiable suspicion of the diplomacy of Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he recognized that the German danger had rendered the Agreement indispensable, and in the House of Lords he defended it with conspicuous spirit and effectiveness.

Only on one foreign question did he differ very seriously from Edward Grey, and then because he was disposed to give a more strictly logical effect to his suspicions of Germany than was the case with his colleague. This was in regard to the Baltic and North Sea Agreement which was negotiated with Germany in 1908. The Agreement was a parallel to the Mediterranean and East Atlantic Agreement of the previous year under which the political *status quo* in the countries

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Paper*, Cd. 7467, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Letters from Grey, Sept. 8, and Fitzmaurice, Nov. 25, 1907, and Feb. 7, 1908, Morley, Feb. 8, and Grey, June 7, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from and to Fitzmaurice, Oct. 10 and Nov. 2, 1908.

bordering on those waters was guaranteed. It was thought that a similar Agreement with Germany in regard to the Northern seas would at once afford her an opportunity of vindicating herself from certain aggressive designs which were ascribed to her and reassure her as to the isolating aims with regard to herself which she was disposed to attribute to the Triple Entente. Thus it was an effort to diminish the tension between her and the Entente. Ripon, however, would hear nothing of it. As the Agreement was ostensibly proposed by Germany<sup>1</sup> he felt certain that some subtle design against the general peace lurked within it. Moreover, he argued, it was unnecessary, and whatever was unnecessary was impolitic. "It does not seem to me," he writes to Grey, "that a North Sea Convention would do us any good, and it might hamper us inconveniently in the future. All that we need in the North Sea is to have our hands quite free as they now are."<sup>2</sup> He threatened Grey to oppose the Agreement in Cabinet, and even asked the Prime Minister for a day to discuss it.<sup>3</sup> When the day came he was confined to his home by another heart attack, and the Cabinet, preoccupied by the Licensing Bill, hastily approved Grey's attitude.<sup>4</sup>

During the early part of 1908 it fell to Ripon as Leader in the Lords to give expression to the feelings of the House on the death of one of the oldest of his political colleagues, the Duke of Devonshire, and on the resignation and, a few weeks later, the death of the most intimate of his more recent co-workers, Henry Campbell-Bannerman.<sup>5</sup> These functions were ominous. His speech on the death of the Prime Minister was, indeed, his last

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, it was first suggested by the present writer, who was actively, though unofficially, concerned in the early stages of the negotiations.

<sup>2</sup> Dec. 15, 1907. See also letters to and from Grey, Dec. 12 and 13, 1907, Jan. 19, 1908, and from Fitzmaurice, Jan. 18, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> January 19, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Crewe, Feb. 12, 1908. See also letter from Grey, Feb. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Hansard*, ser. iv, vol. clxxxvi, pp. 1178-9, 1183; vol. clxxxvii, pp. 883-4; vol. clxxxviii, p. 1532.

act of Leadership. Asquith, who succeeded Campbell-Bannerman as head of the Government, pressed him to continue in his offices, but he felt that he was no longer equal to the strain of Parliamentary work, and he would only consent to remain in the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal.

*From H. H. Asquith*

20 CAVENDISH SQUARE, W., 10th April, 1908.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I have just returned and am sorry not to be able to come and see you, as I understand you are at Studley.

In regard to the future I wish to be guided entirely by your own wishes. If you feel disposed and able to stay on with the Privy Seal and the Lords' leadership, I need not assure you how grateful I shall be. The decision rests altogether with yourself. You have given a long life of great service to the State, and are better entitled than anyone to think of health and comfort, and even of personal ease.

But, as I have said to you more than once, in all sincerity, both I and all your colleagues set a high value on your co-operation and counsel.

The King spoke most warmly of you.

Yours very sincerely, H. H. ASQUITH.

*To H. H. Asquith*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 11th April, 1908.

MY DEAR ASQUITH,—I have replied briefly by telegram to your most considerate and flattering letter just received. I gather from it that you would like me to remain a member of your Cabinet, and I shall be happy to do so, as I am most desirous to give you every help in my power in the heavy task you have taken upon yourself. You ask me to stay on if I feel disposed and able to do so. I am heartily disposed to do so, but in one respect I do not feel myself able to retain my present

position. I am not now equal in many ways to continue to lead the H. of L., and I am convinced that if I were to attempt to do so the result would not be satisfactory either to you or to myself. Besides which the present arrangement does not to my mind work quite satisfactorily. Nothing could be kinder than Crewe is to me in every way—if he were my own son he could not treat me with more consideration—but an arrangement of the Two Kings of Brentford description must always be subject to difficulties, of which some show themselves now and then in the present case. And unselfish as Crewe may be, it is not fair to him to let him take almost all the work and give him none of the honour. I think I said something of this sort in the conversation I had with you some time ago. If therefore you feel that I should be of some use to you in the Cabinet, though no longer acting as leader of the H. of L., I shall be very glad to stay on, as long as I am able—but I feel the burden of years a good deal and must look to retirement from public life altogether at no distant period. I can scarcely say how grateful I am to you for the kindness of your letter. I am proud of your good opinion. It is a great gratification to receive such a judgment of my public career from so good a judge. I am much honoured by what you tell me of the way in which the King spoke of me.

Yours most sincerely, RIPON.

Of the many tributes which reached him when his decision became known it is only necessary to quote the following from the Leader of the Opposition. It forms an interesting parallel to the letter which Salisbury wrote to him under similar circumstances thirty-five years earlier :<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, Vol. I, pp. 283-4.



*From the Marquess of Lansdowne*

DERREEN, KENMARE, CO. KERRY, 16th April, 1908.

MY DEAR RIPON,—I am touched by your thought of writing to me, and above all by your kind words as to our political relations. We shall all of us regret that you are no longer to lead us, and recognise the spirit in which your duties as leader were always discharged. *We* have had the big battalions in our house: *you* have had them behind you in the House of Commons, and if you are good enough to commend the manner in which our forces have been handled, we may be permitted to recall the fact that your superior strength elsewhere never led you to deal with us otherwise than fairly and considerately.

I am glad you remain on the front bench: I hope, to set us for many years an example of sound and dignified Parliamentary methods.

Always, my dear Ripon,

Yours very sincerely, LANSDOWNE.

Lansdowne's hope was not destined to be realized. Five months later Ripon resigned for good in circumstances which the public suspected at the time, but which have hitherto not been definitely authenticated.

In August a Eucharist Congress on an unprecedentedly solemn scale was held in London, and it was intended to conclude its sittings with a public procession of the Holy Sacrament, attended by a Cardinal Legate and an imposing assemblage of Roman Catholic dignitaries. There had been similar processions on a smaller scale in 1898 and 1901, and although they were clearly contraventions of the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act they had not been interfered with by the authorities. On this occasion the assent of the police was obtained when the programme was first drawn up. Later on,

however, the Protestant Alliance opened a furious campaign against the procession. Members of Parliament were approached, meetings of protest were organized, and public opinion became visibly disturbed. Nothing, however, was done by the Government until four days before the date fixed for the procession, when the Prime Minister privately asked Ripon to use his influence with the Archbishop to secure its cancellation. Ripon, though deeply humiliated by this reminder of the survival of Roman Catholic disabilities, and sore with the Home Office at the affront which he felt had been placed upon his Church by its negligence and mismanagement, acquiesced in the Prime Minister's request, and after a long and painful correspondence the Archbishop agreed to eliminate the Host and the vestments from the procession. On reading all the correspondence it is difficult to deny, in view of the threat of public disorder, that the Government had a good case and that even the charge of negligence could not well be sustained against them. It was, indeed, rather to their credit that they did not anticipate the intolerant response which the inflammatory appeals of the Protestant Alliance found in public opinion and in the calculated agitation of certain political opponents.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Ripon felt—and quite reasonably—that he could not remain a member of a Government which, however reluctantly, had identified itself with Roman Catholic disabilities. Accordingly he resigned.

*To H. H. Asquith*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 14th September, 1908.

MY DEAR ASQUITH,—It is with deep regret that I must inform you that I feel that it would be impossible for me to support or defend the course which has been

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Archbishop Bourne, Sept. 9; from H. J. Gladstone, Sept. 9; from Asquith, Sept. 10; to H. J. Gladstone, Sept. 10; from and to Asquith, Sept. 10, 11, and 12, 1908.

taken by the Government, and especially by the Home Office, with regard to the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament which it was intended to hold in Westminster yesterday afternoon.

If the majority of my colleagues had at the outset thought it right to take exception to that Procession on the ground that it would involve some infringement of the Catholic Emancipation Act I should have been prepared, though reluctantly, to acquiesce in such a decision, or I should on the other hand very gladly have supported the view that the many occasions, especially those in 1898 and 1901, when the provisions of the Emancipation Act referring to this matter have been treated as obsolete, would have justified the Government in regarding them as no longer practically in force.

But neither of these courses has been adopted. The intention to hold the Procession and its character were known for weeks, and were matters of public notoriety ; the arguments *pro* and *con* have filled the columns of almost every newspaper, the Archbishop of Westminster had informed the Police of his intentions and had been assured by them that they did not anticipate any serious disorder ; but it was not until the 9th September, four days before the date fixed for the Procession, that any objection whatever was taken on the part of the Government to it.

I am at a loss to see what defence there is for such conduct. It seems to me to be marked by great discourtesy to some of the highest dignitaries of the Church of which I am a member, and by great want of consideration for the Catholic people of this country, and therefore I can take no responsibility for it, and have no choice but to ask you to lay before the King my resignation of the office of Lord Privy Seal.

It is most painful to me thus to sever my official connection with you and with the rest of my colleagues in the Cabinet. I have always been treated by you all with the utmost consideration. I am in hearty agreement with you on public politics and on general political questions. But at least I have this consolation that at my advanced age I could not have long continued to hold office, and that I shall perhaps be able to be of more use to you in a private than in a public position.

Believe me,

Always yours most sincerely, RIPON.

Nearly four weeks elapsed before Ripon's resignation was made public, and then the reason officially given was his age and ill-health. The incident had proved extremely embarrassing for the Government. The illness of Lord Tweedmouth had rendered other changes in the Cabinet necessary, and there was danger that if the true story of the Government's attitude in regard to the Eucharist procession were made known difficulties with the Irish Members and other sections of their supporters might arise. In these circumstances Ripon good-naturedly assented to the official explanation of his resignation.<sup>1</sup> The result was, however, that he suffered much misunderstanding at the hands of his Roman Catholic co-religionists.

His last words to Asquith, written on the fateful day when Austria announced the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, show how deeply he was still preoccupied by the dangers which threatened European peace :

“ I am afraid you have an anxious time before you in regard to Foreign Affairs ; but I have such complete confidence in Grey that I am not uneasy. Austria-

<sup>1</sup> Letters to and from Asquith, Sept. 15, 16, 20 (2), 22, 30, Oct. 2 ; and to and from Crewe, Oct. 4, 7, and 8, 1908.

Hungary's conduct is very discreditable. And so my public life closes, and my last word in it is to wish you and your Government every possible success."

Curiously enough Edward Grey was the first of his colleagues to write him a letter of sympathy on his retirement :

*From Sir Edward Grey*

FALLODON, CHRISTON BANK, NORTHUMBERLAND.

*October 7th, 1908.*

DEAR LORD RIPON,—Sydney Buxton told me that you had finally decided to retire from the Government, and he gave me a very kind message from you. I am grieved that you are going to leave us, for your advice to your Colleagues was the outcome of wise experience greater than that of anyone else and far beyond the experience of most of us.

If your decision is really final I shall very much regret it ; your approval of my own work has been a real encouragement, and I am very grateful for your kindness. I have felt it the more because you sat in a Cabinet with my grandfather,<sup>1</sup> and even as a boy the photographs of the last Palmerston Cabinet with yours among them were familiar to me in a volume here. And I have taken some amount of pride in the thought of having risen to be your Colleague.

The clouds in the East are very heavy ; but will, I trust, disperse in time without a storm.

Yours very sincerely, E. GREY.

Ripon's reply has more than a conventional interest :

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Grey was Chancellor of the Duchy and afterwards Home Secretary in the Palmerston Cabinet of 1859-60, in which Ripon served successively as War Secretary and Secretary for India.

*To Sir Edward Grey*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 8th October, 1908.

MY DEAR GREY,—Your letter has given me great pleasure, and I am very much touched by your having thought of writing to me at a moment when you must be overwhelmed with work of the highest interest and most absorbing importance.

It is, I assure you, with the greatest regret that I have retired from the Cabinet, but, apart from all other considerations, I feel the pressure of my great age very much, and I am sure that I am not equal to go through such a session as that which will commence next week.

It has been most agreeable to me to have been able, ever since the formation of C.-B.'s Government, to give a constant and unhesitating support to your management of foreign affairs. It has been a pleasant sight to a veteran like me to see a young man such as you are conducting, at his first entrance into the Cabinet, the foreign policy of this country with so much skill and tact and steadiness as you have always displayed, and I have rejoiced all the more because that young man was the grandson of one whose Colleague I had been in the first Cabinet in which I served, and whom I have always regarded as the finest specimen I have ever known of an English gentleman and of a wise and consistent public man.

You have arrived at a point which will be the crowning period of your career. You have a task of enormous difficulty before you; the peace of this country, and, I may truly say, of Europe is very much in your hands; but in those hands I am well content to think that it is placed.

If ever I can be of use to you, you know, I hope, that my help, such as it is, will always be at your service.

Good-bye.

Yours ever most sincerely, RIPON.

The following selection of extracts from other letters which reached Ripon at this time constitute an impressive judgement on his fine record of public service and on the attractiveness of his personal qualities :

*From Lord Loreburn* <sup>1</sup>

“ *October 30, 1908* : I have been expecting to meet you in the House, and would like to say by word of mouth rather than write how sorry I am at your leaving the Cabinet. But I hear you have gone to the country, and do not know if I shall see you. I was very downcast about it, for C.-B. and Bryce and you were on the formation of the Government the men I most agreed with and relied upon. It is a very different Government to-day from what it was three years ago. But I will not dwell on these things, and will hope for the best and recall how much there still is in the Cabinet that inspires hope. My wish was to thank you from my heart for the kindness you have showed to me and the sympathy from which (I hope at least) it sprung. And to say how I hope that I may still have the happiness of meeting you, though not, I fear, so often.”

*From Viscount Morley of Blackburn*

“ *November 24, 1908* : You will not think my absence from your feast to-day <sup>2</sup> due to indifference or unconcern. You have had a host of colleagues in public business. Let me beg you to be sure that not one of them, or one

<sup>1</sup> Then Lord Chancellor. Created an Earl in 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Ripon was entertained by the Eighty Club on November 24, 1908.

who has ever had the pleasant privilege of your private friendship, has ever held you in higher esteem or thought of you with more affectionate cordiality than—in all sincerity and all humility—I presume to do. I can recall nobody in our political history who has played his part in the discharge of great duties with more staunchness, integrity, and elevation. You and I marched together side by side through some of the hardest passages of our time. I could never desire a trustier comrade. I grieve over your future absence from the party counsels. Splendidly you have earned your title to repose.”

*From James Bryce*<sup>1</sup>

“ *October 28, 1908* : Thinking of you always as one of the best and truest friends we have ever had, we want to tell you how much we sympathise with you in all the regrets which a parting from the more immediate and direct responsibilities of political life brings with it, and to wish you a long enjoyment of rest in good health. There are so many things one desires to think over in the later years of life that I have always felt one ought to keep time for quiet meditation, especially upon the things that belong to our peace. . . . I wonder if I ever told you how often I have heard from natives of India, here as well as in Europe, and from American missionaries how much love and honour still surrounds the memory of you among the people of India. No one, they all say, ever did so much to make the people of India believe in English good faith and good will. Well would it be for us now there if all other Viceroys had been able to do the like. May I say that no one in

<sup>1</sup> Bryce had been Irish Secretary in the Campbell-Bannerman Cabinet, but became Ambassador at Washington in 1907, and was raised to the Peerage as Viscount Bryce in 1914.



our days has ever retired from Office who can look back on a purer and higher record of work done for good causes than yourself ? ”

*From Lewis Harcourt*<sup>1</sup>

“ *October 10, 1908* : I cannot tell you with what great regret I have learned of your decision that you can no longer continue the work of the Cabinet. I shall greatly miss your sturdy Liberalism and your invariably sound judgment, which has been so often of so great assistance. More especially shall I miss it *now*, for I think you are the only one of us who had any knowledge or judgment on Foreign Affairs. . . . May I add what a joy it has been to me to be (if only a short time) in the same Cabinet with you and all my gratitude for your unstinted kindness to me through my whole life.”

*From Earl Carrington*

“ *October 10, 1908* : I read the announcement of your retirement from the Government with a very heavy heart. Your loss to all your friends and supporters is irreparable. I have served under a good many leaders, but there was no one in whom I had so much confidence and respect. It was largely owing to you that we were as a party able to get a Land Policy. Spencer and Kimberley, grand Liberals as they were, never would hear of it, and the country owes you a deep debt of gratitude. I shall never forget all your kindness to me personally, and I feel sure you will often be in the house to help your old colleagues with your speech, sage counsel, and advice.”

<sup>1</sup> First Commissioner of Works in Campbell-Bannerman's Government and Colonial Secretary in Asquith's Cabinet. Created Viscount Harcourt in 1917.

*From Augustine Birrell*

“ *Sunday, October 11, 1908* : The sudden news of your resignation was a great shock to me. I can only say I am very, very sorry. If any man has earned that relief which resignation gives, it is you, and I cannot wonder at it, but we are selfish men, and I am thinking more of my loss than of your well-deserved repose near Fountains Abbey. It is presumptuous of me to say so much, but I always felt that you and I were Friends who in a row would be found side by side, sharing a common fortune, were that fortune to be good or bad. You will be missed by every one of your colleagues, and as there is no one who can fill your place, you will continue to be missed until the hour comes when we shall all be scattered, never to reassemble again in anything like our present shape or composition.”

*From Walter Runciman*<sup>1</sup>

“ *October 10, 1908* : I shall never forget your kindness to me from the first moment I became your colleague, and much as I have valued the honour of being associated with the oldest and most distinguished living statesman, I valued still more the friendliness which you showed to me, and the way in which you took me into your confidence. It is therefore with a sense of great personal loss that I contemplate your retirement from the Cabinet; but I sincerely trust that short as our connection has been you will long allow me to number myself amongst your most cordial friends.”

*From Lord Fitzmaurice*

“ *October 10, 1908* : It is with the greatest regret that I have read in the *Times* of this morning that you

<sup>1</sup> Then President of the Board of Education.

have resigned the office of Lord Privy Seal and your seat in the Cabinet. My regrets are both public and private: *public* because you are the only member of the Cabinet besides Grey who take an interest in foreign affairs and have knowledge and experience of them; *private* because of your constant kindness to me. . . ."

" *October* 14, 1908: I attended my first Cabinet to-day,<sup>1</sup> and I was told I might occupy the chair which had generally been yours. I joyfully did so, in the hope that I might thereby take unto myself the wisdom which must be clinging to it."

*From Lord Courtney of Penwith*

" *October* 12, 1908: I must send you a word to express my grief on your leaving the Government. Without unduly disparaging ministers, I must own that they seem to me sometimes to lack courage and sometimes prudence; and that you were, and would be, good in redressing both tendencies. So on public grounds I cannot help regretting that you are not continuing in Council. I suppose you will not be coming to Westminster so often, and will not be able to give me that lift home to which I was getting accustomed, but this is a mere private loss. I hope you are continuing in good health, and that rural life will at least bring you the consolation of maintaining your strength."

*From G. W. E. Russell*

" *October* 10, 1908: All good Liberals deplore your retirement. All good citizens wish you well; and you

<sup>1</sup> On the reconstruction of the Cabinet Fitzmaurice had become Chancellor of the Duchy.

must allow me to address you not only as Liberal and as citizen, but as a grateful and affectionate *friend*. I think you may fairly adopt the motto which 'Uncle John' made his own :

Not heaven itself upon the past has power ;  
But what has been, has been,  
And I have had my hour.

With all kind thoughts and wishes."

*From Lady Harcourt*<sup>1</sup>

" October 10, 1908 : The papers are full of war clouds and urgent public affairs, and I see nothing but this fact, that you are laying down your burden of work. I think there are few living now who personally remember the long sequence of events in your life as I do, although the whole country knows the noble record of your services. . . . I am sure it is no breach of Cabinet secrets for me to know through our Loulou<sup>2</sup> how wise in council, how stalwart in Liberalism you have been. The link which has kept us together unseen has been the boy who owes more than I have words to express to the influences of your home, and surely it is very touching that you should have helped his first steps in this inner circle of public life, when you and he and I had lost for this world so much of what made private life best worth having. All your friends and colleagues will be ready with their tributes—I am only remembering days when we were all young together, when you were so kind to my parents and myself, when *She* was surrounded by all her family and hardly less an angel than she is now. . . . May good gifts from God still be yours."

<sup>1</sup> Widow of Sir William Vernon Harcourt.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis Harcourt.

The last letter in the packet from which the above extracts are taken is a belated scrawl, which bears pathetic evidence of the strain under which it was written. It was from Ripon's old Chief in the House of Lords, Spencer, who three years before had been stricken by the illness from which he was still suffering, and from which he died in 1910.

*From Earl Spencer*

HINTON WOOD HOUSE, BOURNEMOUTH,

*November 10, 1908.*

MY DEAR RIPON,—I never wrote to you when you gave in your resignation from the Government.

I am very sorry to learn your decision, but you have done so much in politics, in the H. of Commons, in such offices, and through great positions, and even in India, and your fine work for the U. States.

No one has done such splendid work for the country, and even as Chief in the House of Lords.

I shall always admire what you have done in many, many years. . . .

I write badly, but I am writing to you.

Yours very truly, SPENCER.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE

(1909)

RIPON survived his retirement from office only nine months.

To the last he retained all his interest in the political events of the day. Although his health steadily deteriorated he spent much of his time in London in close contact with his former colleagues and occasionally even put in an appearance in the House of Lords. He was not strong enough to participate in the Debates, but he felt that his vote and moral support should not be denied to Crewe and the Party.<sup>1</sup> He continued actively to exchange confidences with Fitzmaurice on Foreign Affairs, and was delighted to receive from him batches of documents which kept him abreast of what was happening.<sup>2</sup> He followed closely the fortunes of Runciman's new Education Bill, gave its author the benefit of all his rich experience, and at a critical moment when there was danger of a rupture with the Roman Catholic Bishops, brought the Minister and Archbishop Bourne together for an amicable discussion.<sup>3</sup> With Crewe he continued his correspondence on the general business of the House of Lords, much in the same way as when they were colleagues in the Leadership.

The question that lay nearest his heart was that of Indian Reforms, to which Morley's still pending Indian Councils Bill had, as has been seen, given a new

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Crewe, October 3, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Fitzmaurice, November 2, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Runciman, November 18, 1908.

actuality. He had not responded to the appeal addressed to him by Gokhale in the previous June,<sup>1</sup> and the fact that he had not done so had weighed a good deal on his mind. He felt all the delicacy of sending a message to India in certification of the good faith of the sensitive Secretary of State, but, on the other hand, he was profoundly anxious for the success of the Bill, and he was also afraid that his silence in regard to it might be interpreted by his friends in India as implying some measure of dissatisfaction with the projected reforms or a diminution of his own interest in the welfare of India. Accordingly he had intended to take part in the debate on the Second Reading in the Lords, but, unfortunately, when the day came he was too ill to leave Bournemouth, whither he had been sent by his physician. He then proposed, with Morley's assent and the indulgence of the House, to say what he had to say when the Bill went into Committee, but again he was too ill to speak.<sup>2</sup> One more opportunity remained. It would be possible, if he were well enough, to deliver himself of his "message" on the motion for the Third Reading, and he determined to make an effort to do this. At the same time, in anticipation of another failure, he wrote to his old friend Malabari of Bombay a letter of explanation which might be made public in India as a sort of substitute for his speech :

[PRIVATE]

*To M. Malabari*

HOTEL BURLINGTON, BOSCOMBE, *March 4, 1909.*

DEAR MR. MALABARI,—I have owed you a letter, I am afraid, for a long time, but when the "bomb disorders" in India first broke out I waited to see, before writing to you, how they would develop, and since that time I have been suffering from influenza and little fit

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 290-91.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Morley, February 26, 1909.

for any correspondence ; but I cannot wait any longer before letting you know what deep grief those dynamite disorders have caused me, both as showing the existence of a state of things among a portion of the Indian population which I had not previously believed to be possible, and also as rendering it necessary for me to know the course which the Government would take about these matters before writing anything with respect to them.

The existence of these outrages in India is horrible to think of, but I am sure that they are repudiated by the great body of the Indian people, and I hold it to be most important that those who condemn them as they ought to be condemned should speak out fearlessly. Lord Morley has taken the right line in repressing the outrages with one hand and introducing reforms with the other. I am very glad to see that his reforms have been on the whole well accepted in India and also in this country, and it has been a very great source of disappointment and regret to me that I have not been able, on account of my illness, to be present in the House of Lords during the principal stages of the India Council's Bill. I hope that my friends in India will thoroughly understand that that is the sole reason why I have not been able to take a part in the Debates.

I should have felt it my duty to have supported Lord Morley's policy, as I am quite sure that that is the only right course for any friend of practical Indian Reform to take. I should much like to know whether you think that the hostile line taken by the Mahommedans has had any connection with those Anglo-Indians whom one should naturally have thought would be likely to oppose Lord Morley's policy.

I hope to go back to London next week, if I am well enough to do so. It would be a great disappointment to



me if I am precluded by illness from taking any part in the Indian discussion, and I should be very grateful to you if you will do what you can to let the cause of my silence be properly understood.

Yours faithfully, RIPON.

Happily the apprehension under which this letter was written was not realized. Ripon was able to appear in his place in the House on March 11, when the motion for the Third Reading was taken, and to make a speech which, though short and halting, said all he wished to say, and which, by its dignity and moderation and the physical sacrifice it obviously entailed, visibly impressed the House.<sup>1</sup>

It followed very closely the lines of the above letter to Malabari. Lansdowne had opened the debate with a critical speech which echoed some of the conventional views of the Anglo-Indian reactionaries. Ripon deprecated this exhibition of Party spirit, and protested that, if it were necessary for the Imperial Parliament to legislate for India, every care should be taken to avoid the sacrifice of Indian interests to the tactical exigencies of Party. Then came a few words giving the "message" for which Gokhale had asked :

"I do not intend at this moment to discuss the details of this measure, neither am I physically able to do so ; but I do desire to give my most complete assent to the proposals of my noble friend behind me [Morley], who, dealing with circumstances of great difficulty, has adopted, as it seems to me, the truest policy in such cases, on the one hand firmly putting down every attempt of sedition or outrage, and on the other hand bringing forward this measure which, in his view, is calculated to lead to the necessary reforms."

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard, House of Lords*, vol. i, pp. 420-4.

This certificate to the Bill—all the more generous because it concealed the differences which had arisen between him and Morley as to the scope of the legislation for “putting down sedition and outrage”—was followed by a characteristic certificate to the peoples of India. Lansdowne had alluded to the bomb outrages as justifying a doubt as to the expediency of Liberal reforms.

“My noble friend opposite must surely know that there is not really a dangerous condition of affairs in India. Though a spirit of outrage and conspiracy and violent hostility to the Government undoubtedly exists, there is also a desire for moderate improvement and advance. Indians are now offered a larger share than they have hitherto had in the administration of their own affairs. This will do more than anything else to place British rule in India on a novel footing, no doubt, but a firmer and more certain footing in the days in which we live than that on which it has hitherto stood.”

He concluded with a warning as to the difficulty of carrying on a despotic Government in India in face of “the democratic movement of to-day” and more especially of the progress of European education among the natives :

“Our system of education in India contrasts strangely with the means of public employment open to the natives. We are turning out year by year hundreds of young men with the highest European University education without opening to them the means of a legitimate satisfaction. The proposals in this Bill help to meet that difficulty . . . and I trust that they will be passed without further opposition. Parliamentary proceedings are probably a dark enigma to most of the natives of

India. They are not, indeed, always very intelligible to ourselves. Let us take care that they do not assume a form which will confirm the doubts of Indians as to the true nature of our rule."

The House listened with sympathy to Ripon's earnest words, and swiftly recognized the sincerity of the appeal which he was making for a measure which was, in a very literal sense, the fruition of his own life-work. Later in the debate Lord Midleton gracefully summed up the impression he had produced. After expressing the "extreme gratification" with which members of both sides of the House welcomed "the reappearance of the noble Marquess in debate," he added: "The noble Marquess's speech breathed on this occasion that broad spirit of toleration and trust in the people for which he has always been distinguished."<sup>1</sup> It was Ripon's last appearance in Parliament, and it is curious to note, as illustrating how accident often contrives to give a fitting note to men's lives, that both in the House of Commons<sup>2</sup> and the House of Lords his last speeches were on India.

A few days later he returned to Studley. Throughout April and May he was very ill and his strength visibly failed. In June there was a slight improvement, but it was not maintained. His life slowly ebbed away, and on July 9, within a few weeks of his eighty-second birthday, he peacefully closed his eyes, consoled by the ritual of his Church and by the deep religious faith which had inspired every act of his long record of public and private service, and which had so signally helped him in all his difficulties and comforted him in his sorrows.

It has already been said that Ripon retained his interest in public affairs to the end of his life. How true this is, is shown by the copies of two letters which are the last documents preserved among his chronologically arranged

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard, House of Lords*, vol. i, p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, vol. i, p. 142.

papers. One was a letter written to Crewe only a fortnight before his death, to which Crewe alluded in the affectionate tribute he paid to his memory in the House of Lords on July 12.<sup>1</sup> Ripon was then too weak to write himself, although he managed to attach a tremulous signature to the letter ; but from the dictated text it is clear that his mind was as lucid and his views as firm, and even as combative, as when he was in the thick of the Parliamentary fight. The chief question with which he dealt was the reform of the House of Lords, which had reached a critical stage owing to the hostility of the House to the Socialist measures embodied in the Budget of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George :

*To the Earl of Crewe*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 25 June, 1909.

MY DEAR CREWE,—I see no chance of my being in London next week, though I am improving slowly. My doctor, however, is very positive that I ought not to undertake a journey to London at the present moment.

I have been leading an absolutely idle life for the last few weeks, and it is only by this means that I have been able to make progress.

I am very sorry to miss Curzon's debate on Monday, though I do not suppose the House will care much about the subject. I should be obliged to you, however, if you could, if possible, run your eye over my speech of the 1st August, 1905. You will see there the line I took with Spencer's full approval ; he wished the speech to be published by the Liberal Publication Department, which was done, so that it stands now as embodying in the main the views of the Party.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard, House of Lords*, vol. ii, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> The speech dealt with the constitutional questions raised by the quarrel between Curzon and Kitchener and strongly supported the attitude of Curzon and the policy pursued by him.

I don't know what line you are going to take about Newton's motion for the reform of the House of Lords. I quite agree with what I suppose to be your opinion, that no satisfactory arrangement of a permanent character can be come to without large modifications of the present constitution of the House of Lords, but I do not understand you to say that no alteration of that constitution would be required if the question of final Veto could be settled, but as we have not had an opportunity of talking the matter over I am glad that I shall be absent from the discussion.

Of course, if the Lords choose to raise such delicate questions as their rights to alter Money Bills they must take the consequences, but upon that point my opinion is so decided that I should be prepared for what would be regarded as violent measures in the case of their attempting to enforce a claim of that kind.

As far as I can judge the Budget seems to be getting on well, and in spite of the tall talk on both sides I do not as yet see any cause to anticipate a very serious struggle.

Yours sincerely, RIPON.

The second letter was dictated only two days before his death. It discussed the riotous conduct of the Suffragettes, and was written in reply to a letter from his cousin, Lady Isabel Margesson, who had taken a great interest in the Suffragette movement. Ripon had sympathized with the early Women's Rights agitation, and in 1907 had spoken in the House of Lords in support of the Bill for conferring the franchise on women in County and Borough Councils' Elections,<sup>1</sup> but all his Whig instincts for law and order rebelled against the tactics of the new apostles of the cause.

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, ser. iv, vol. clxxiv, pp. 1381-6.

Here again his letter bears no trace of the weakness of a dying man :

*To Lady Isabel Margesson*

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, *July 7, 1909.*

MY DEAR ISY,—I hasten to reply to your letter of the 5th, but, before doing so, I think it is only right that I should explain to you that though I am still of opinion that there is a fair case for the extension of the franchise to women, my views upon the subject are considerably shaken by the course recently pursued by the persons commonly called "suffragettes." I will not enter into any discussion with you as to the propriety of that course, but I must plainly say that it is one which appears to me to be most injurious to the cause of female suffrage, and to be on that account, apart from all other considerations, deserving of the strongest opposition of all the real friends of Women's Suffrage. I have, as you request me in your letter, examined the paper which you forwarded to me in it. The questions raised in it are of a purely legal character, upon which my opinion would be of no value whatever. It can only be decided by lawyers, and I feel that I should run the gravest risk of misleading you if I were to offer you any advice of my own about it.

I have been and still am seriously unwell, and have been ordered by my doctors to abstain from entering into any discussion in respect to public matters, so that even if I felt myself better able than I do at present to give you any useful advice upon a subject so difficult as this, I can only entreat you now to pause before you commit yourself to the encouragement of a policy which seems to me to be calculated to throw back the advance of the cause you have so much at heart.

Believe me, yours affectionately, RIPON.

Excuse my writing to you by another hand, but I have been much pulled down by my illness and am very weak just now.

Ripon's well-filled and fruitful life is mirrored in the tributes to his memory which came from many quarters. The King, the House of Lords, the Churches, the Liberal Party Organizations, the Universities of London, Manchester, and Leeds, many learned Societies, almost every organ of public life in the North and West Ridings and many in Lincolnshire, where he had once been equally active, not to speak of shoals of letters from public institutions and public men throughout the Empire, bore testimony to the high value and wide range of his public life and to the admiration and affection he had everywhere inspired by his uprightness, his courage, his loyalty, and the gentleness and richness of his sympathies. Much of what was said was a repetition in an accentuated form of the tributes paid to him on his retirement from office. The chief of these have already been recited, and it would be superfluous to duplicate them.

It is not often that tributes of this kind can be said to be free from exaggeration ; but on re-reading them to-day, in a fuller knowledge of all that Ripon thought and did during the sixty years he dedicated to the service of his country, one may justly claim for him that he deserved all the praises which were then bestowed upon him. It is not pretended that he was a great historic figure, but he was a statesman who, in his time, rendered inestimable service to the spread of liberal ideas and to their effective application in many fields of national and imperial progress. Above all, he was a splendid example of the best type of Englishman, who loves his country and serves her with courage, intelligence, modesty, and self-denial, and who, at the same time, can charm and subdue his fellow-man, whether in council or controversy, with his simple faith, his high natural integrity, and his infinite loveliness.

He was laid to rest on July 15 by the side of his wife in the Memorial Church in Studley Park, in the picturesque corner of the West Riding of which he wrote to Tom Hughes fifty-six years before that he was "fonder of it than any other place in the world."

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Lord Buxton, who, during the closing years of Lord Ripon's life, was closely associated with him in his political activities and was one of the most intimate of his friends,<sup>1</sup> has been good enough to write for this record the following appreciation and personal recollections :

"The most marked feature of Lord Ripon's career was his unswerving attachment and fidelity to the Radical principles which he had embraced and adopted in his youth. In his old age, as in his prime and in his youth, he was equally a Radical stalwart. He escaped the disease—political atrophy—which so often coincides with increasing years and multiplied dignities. But this in no way meant that he accepted a proposal *because* it was dubbed "Radical" or "advanced." On the contrary, he would impartially subject it to careful examination, with a view to see if it constituted, or had in it the germs of, a real and workable reform, and was not merely masquerading under a deceptive label. He would consider it sympathetically; he would instinctively look for its good points, and not crab or criticise its weak side—he knew there would be plenty of others to do that. His would be always the constructive and not the destructive point of view.

"He had little sympathy with faddists and pedants.

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Buxton dated April 8, 1901, Ripon says: "It is rare that towards the end of a long life it is given to anyone to make new friends to whom one is drawn by ties of so much confidence and esteem as unite my wife and me to Mrs. Buxton and yourself,"



His robust common sense revolted from the position that you must have all or none. As he once said in a speech to the Eighty Club (November 1908) in reply to an observation made by the Chairman, Mr. Asquith, 'My right honourable friend said that I was a member of Lord Palmerston's last Government. That is true, but Lord Palmerston's last Government was not a very advanced Government, but I did under that Government what I have done ever since. I took what I could get and waited to get more, believing that that was a wise and sound principle in public life.' In other words, he never played the rôle of a political Don Quixote ready to tilt at windmills. Similarly, in discussing in private any proposition, he would look at the best, not at the worst side; would take the optimistic, not the pessimistic view.

"As is well known, he was greatly interested in Labour questions, and deeply sympathised with Labour aspirations. He did not shrink from State interference in questions of wages and the like; and this at a time when such proposals were supposed to be contrary to all the sacrosanct laws of political economy. He was convinced that it was the duty of the State itself to deal with the question of unemployment. He objected to the term 'working man' as invidious and too exclusive; and on one occasion suggested to the Trades Union Conference that they should discover a more appropriate term.

"He was a sincere Home Ruler by inclination, sympathy, and thought. Once, at the time of Home Rule depression, he spoke of himself as a 'wholly unrepentant Home Ruler' (Eighty Club, June 6, 1907).

"He said also of himself, in discussing a Land Bill which contained compulsory acquisition clauses: 'All

my interests are bound up with land ; I am that terrible being, a landowner, and I take, of course, the landowner's view. But I rejoice in the Bill ' ; and he went on to say that, though he did not much like compulsion, that for the public advantage, or in the public interest, compulsion would be fully justified.

“ He had a very high standard of right and wrong, and was deeply religious. Morally, and, I am sure, physically also, he was blessed with great courage, which never degenerated into obstinacy. He was not a bit afraid of shadows. He only saw the real lions in the path, and them he would, without hesitation, attack with any available weapon. He was not aggressive in his political propaganda nor impatient of opposition. He preferred to persuade rather than to bludgeon. He was tenderhearted for man and beast. He hated giving pain ; and it gave him no pleasure, but the reverse, to tread on people's corns.

“ As the Head of a great Public Department—if he were the same, as doubtless he was, in other offices as at the Colonial Office—he was an admirable chief, hardworking, conscientious, kindly ; bringing to bear on problems with which he was confronted good judgment and much common sense. He possessed, I think, a somewhat rare gift—the selective power which enabled him, as the head of a huge department burdened, over-burdened, with infinite and perpetual accumulations of work, to do what he ought to do and to leave undone (for others to do) what he ought not to do.

“ He was very modest about his own powers of expression in minute, letter, or despatch. ‘ I can't write,’ he often said to me. As a matter of fact, he wrote clearly and well ; and the despatches he composed himself were, if not distinguished, at least lucid and well con-

structed and well argued. He was always perfectly willing and, indeed, anxious to receive suggestions and criticisms from the literary standpoint as well as from the point of view of substance.

“The position of an Under-Secretary of State in a great Department—even where specific and prescribed duties are allotted to him—is somewhat difficult and anomalous. He feels not unfrequently that he is neither fish nor flesh nor fowl nor good red herring. His use and wont, his authority and responsibilities, his enjoyment of and interest in his post, depend in a very large degree on his Chief. To his Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office no Chief could possibly have been kinder, more helpful, more sympathetic, more generous than Lord Ripon ; and I, as his Under-Secretary there, am profoundly grateful to him.

“As a Statesman and Administrator he was perhaps too diffident and lacked adequate self-confidence. He did not insist sufficiently on his own views, though he held them strongly ; nor did he attach adequate weight and importance to the ripe experience on which they were founded. In his last Cabinet, for instance, he naturally carried weight by reason of his age, experience, and personality ; but he did not quite do himself justice in general discussion, and was too diffident of his opinion and powers of expression.

“For a public man—that is, a public man who desires that his work should be appreciated—he was over-modest and over-retiring. It could most certainly be said of him as of Lord Roberts, ‘e don’t advertise.’ May be he was old-fashioned in this respect ; but he greatly disliked and resented the moving limelight which is (spontaneously or otherwise) nowadays apt to be thrown on and to illumine the leading actors on the political

stage. In spite, therefore, of his many years of political life and the great offices which he filled, he was but little known personally or by repute to the politician who rules the roost—the man in the street.

“ Lord Ripon, of course, like everyone else, liked recognition, and public recognition, of his services. The request made to him by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in December 1905 to lead the House of Lords under the new Government gave him intense pleasure. With his usual diffidence he doubted his own powers, but he appreciated the offer as a climax to the War Office, the Admiralty, the Home Office, the India Office, the Viceroyalty of India, and the Colonial Office.

“ To sum him up as a Politician and Statesman, Lord Ripon was a man with whom one would unhesitatingly go tiger-shooting. Pitt once said of Dundas, ‘ Dundas is not an orator, nor much of a speaker ; but Dundas will, without hesitation, go out with you in any weather.’

“ Lord Ripon was such an one.

“ Lord Ripon was, I think, a very shy man in private life ; he was certainly a reserved man ; and was not endowed with much of the small coin of conversation.

“ His occasional rather brusque manner was, I am sure, entirely due to this very shyness, and gave a wrong impression. He used occasionally to bemoan the fact that he had never taken to smoking, as he thought it had cut him off from a good deal of the camaraderie of life and intimacy with other men. But the shyness—though not altogether the reserve—disappeared when he was alone with an intimate friend, or in congenial company, when he expanded and talked and joked freely. I recall one particular little dinner when, dining with us and a few special friends, he was perfectly

delightful and most amusing. He did not often show his deepest feelings. But I have, though rarely, seen him much moved, almost, for the time being, a changed man.

“ My own connection with him—some thirty years his junior—began substantially from the moment I became his Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office in 1892. I had known him before on and off, but in no way intimately ; and had chiefly come into contact with him in connection with Labour matters. But from the moment of our joint entry into the Colonial Office, until the day of his death, I enjoyed an uninterrupted and ever-ripening friendship with him. While in office I saw him when we were together in London nearly every day, and, after we were no longer in office, I used continually to visit him in his house at Cheyne Walk, or, if fine, walk with him on the Embankment, talking fully and freely of men and things.

“ He seldom talked about himself—though he did on occasion. The talk was for the most part political or literary ; political ‘ shop ’ (the most insidious and seductive of topics), persons, policy, programmes, even principles, while sport, fishing, and shooting had their share.

“ Lord Ripon was deeply attached to Studley ; with its park, the ‘ pleasure grounds ’ laid out by ‘ Capability Brown,’ Fountains Abbey, the woods, the deer, the trout stream. He was particularly proud of his trees. ‘ There are larger trees elsewhere,’ he liked to say, ‘ but nowhere is there a better average of big trees.’ He treasured a compliment paid to his trees by Mr. Gladstone. He was fond of repeating a story of an American who walked round the Park with him, and to whom with some pride he pointed out ‘ the lake ’ lying at the

lower end. 'A lake!' ejaculated the American; 'have you the word "pond" in English?'

"My intercourse with him was chiefly of a twofold nature—political and sporting—our views coincided on both. He was a tremendously keen sportsman, and equally fond of fishing and shooting. His letters to me, dealing with office or political questions or other matters, frequently ended with references to past, present, or future sport and prospects. Year after year I used to have the great satisfaction of enjoying some adorable days grouse-driving on his moors. We were seldom more than three guns—Lord de Grey being the third—and never more than four; and occasionally we two were alone together, a bye-day near the end of the season. Or we used to alternate this with fishing a sheet of water (or shall we say a 'pond'?) formed by a dammed-up stream in which the trout waxed fat and rose. Our quiet evenings at Studley with him and Lady Ripon linger in our memory; as does his delightful warmth of hospitality on arrival—both hands stretched out to welcome.

"His sporting keenness never flagged; increasing age and infirmity never quenched his ardour. Whether he were sixty, seventy, or eighty, he was pleased as a boy if he shot well, or if he caught more fish than the other fishermen. I remember on one occasion (I think it was in August 1894) that I had come to Studley for the first two days' grouse driving. Everything was prepared for 'the day,' the weather was favourable, the grouse were numerous. To his dismay, on the eve of the day he received a telegram summoning him at once to London for an urgent Cabinet. He was deeply disappointed. He laughingly declared that he should send in his resignation rather than miss his beloved



“ AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE ”  
(By kind permission of the Proprietors of “ Country Life. ”)





grouse drive! I reminded him of an incident in the career of Lord Derby (the 'Rupert of debate'), who, when Prime Minister, had gone down to Heron Court to shoot a wild swan, whence he was followed by a peremptory summons to town to deal with urgent despatches, Europe having suddenly become convulsed and on the eve of war. He, however, entirely declined to budge until he had shot his swan, a feat that was not accomplished until the third day.

"Lord Ripon was distinctly a good shot by nature, but he was short-sighted and slow-sighted; and in his latter years his difficulty, especially if the light were bad, was to 'put up' his birds; he did not easily see them until they were on him. The keeper in his butt had to act as eyes for him. 'Birds coming to the right, your Lordship . . . straight on to your Lordship . . . left, LEFT,' and he got his share of the bag.

"I greatly treasure the memory of my many years of friendship and association with Lord Ripon.

"His straightforwardness and his transparent simplicity of character were a great example. As chief, as friend, as colleague, his counsel was always at my service, and his sympathy under all circumstances was never-failing."



*APPENDICES*



## APPENDIX I

### THE GODERICH ADMINISTRATION (1827)

(Vol. I, pp. 4-7)

*Memorandum of what passed upon my being appointed First Lord  
of the Treasury, 17th August, 1827*

MR. CANNING died early in the morning of the 8th August 1827. On the same day at half-past one I received the King's commands to attend His Majesty at Windsor. Mr. Sturgess Bourne received the same command. In the interview which we had with His Majesty he stated his feelings and intentions in general terms: saying that he proposed to me to be the First Lord of the Treasury, and to Mr. Sturgess Bourne to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, retaining in the Cabinet all the rest of our colleagues. His Majesty went into very few particulars upon that occasion, except that he expressed a general disinclination to any addition to the Whig members of the Cabinet, and pointed out one or two individuals who he thought might be usefully employed. His Majesty ended by saying that he should make a written communication to the Cabinet, which he would send to me on the following morning. Accordingly on the next day, Thursday, August 9th, I received His Majesty's Paper, which I communicated to my colleagues at a Cabinet which assembled at one o'clock. The King's Paper expressed His Majesty's desire to retain his Government, upon certain explanations as to principles and objects, stating that if the Cabinet agreed to them he would place me at the head of the Treasury. I was desired to prepare an answer to the King's communication, which I did, and submitted it to the Cabinet the same evening. Having been approved, with some alterations, it was submitted to His Majesty the following morning (Friday). The King's answer, acquiescing in the Paper of the Cabinet, was received whilst the Cabinet was sitting, between 5 and 6 on the same afternoon. I received soon after, by the hands of the Lord Chancellor, a paper from the King, containing

his views as to the formation of the Government. On Saturday the 11th, Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Tierney called upon me for the purpose of impressing upon my mind, and thro' me upon the King's, the importance of bringing Lord Holland into the Cabinet. I expressed my doubts of the expediency of such a step, at least for the present, thinking and urging that the stability of the new Government depended essentially upon its being composed out of existing materials: and that I was not prepared to undertake any other system. Nothing more passed in this interview as to other appointments, except that there was every disposition to agree that Mr. Huskisson should lead the House of Commons; and that I stated that I had, by the King's command, offered the Presidency of the Council to the Duke of Portland, to which step on my part no objection was stated. On the same day I had an interview with Lord Dudley, who expressed his desire to give up his office to Lord Lansdowne; but upon my urging the extreme importance of making as little change as possible, he agreed to continue. On Sunday the 12th I wrote to the King to apologize for not going down to Windsor on that day, but stating that I should go down on the Monday. His Majesty expressed in reply his disappointment that I was not prepared to go down on that day; and he sent me, as a memorandum, a scheme for the arrangement of the Government. In this scheme it was proposed to place Mr. Wallace at the Board of Trade with a Peerage, and to appoint Mr. Herries Chancellor of the Exchequer. It stated strong objections to letting in Lord Holland. I went down to Windsor on Monday the 13th, and finding His Majesty determined not to admit Lord Holland at present into the Cabinet, I represented to His Majesty that I thought it would not do to make Mr. Wallace President of the Board of Trade, and that it ought to be offered to Mr. C. Grant with the Cabinet; to this His Majesty assented. Nothing particular passed with respect to Mr. Herries; and I had no reason to suppose that the King attached any peculiar importance to his appointment. Upon my return, I saw Mr. Herries in the evening, and acquainted him with the King's intentions respecting him. He expressed his doubts as to being able to undertake it; but gave no positive answer at that time. On the following morning, Tuesday the 14th, I received a letter from Mr. Herries, stating his inability to undertake the office, and declining it. On the same day (the 14th) I saw Lord

Lansdowne and communicated to him a memorandum which I had received from the King respecting Lord Holland. I stated at the same time to Lord Lansdowne that the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was offered to Mr. Herries : he made no remark at the time upon the subject, but confined his observations principally to the question respecting Lord Holland. In a note, however, from him, which I received on that evening, he asked whether the appointment of Mr. Herries was settled between the King and myself, or whether it was a matter for discussion : I stated in reply that evening, that I had settled it with the King, conceiving that to be the natural mode of arranging a question upon which must necessarily depend my own means of successfully carrying on the business of the Treasury. I saw Lord Lansdowne the next day, the 15th, when he told me in general words that he would not then press the claim of Lord Holland ; and as I had in the course of that morning written to the King to state that Mr. Herries declined, on account of his health, the situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer, I told Lord Lansdowne that I had reason to believe that Mr. Herries would not undertake it. Nothing further passed upon the subject at the time ; and I flattered myself that the whole difficulty was over. The next morning, however (the 16th), I received a letter from the King urging in the strongest terms the appointment of Mr. Herries, and requiring him to go down to Windsor on Friday the 17th, that His Majesty might speak to him. Upon this I proceeded to Windsor, immediately after Mr. Canning's funeral, being strongly impressed with the difficulties which might arise out of this affair : but I did not succeed in impressing them upon His Majesty's mind. These difficulties were much aggravated by the circumstance of my having, on the Wednesday, spoken to Lord Palmerston upon the subject of that office, Mr. Herries having left the question as to himself in my hands. I had, however, an opportunity before the funeral of stating to Lord Palmerston that the King desired to see Mr. Herries, and that consequently the thing was still undecided. (Lord Palmerston made no difficulties.) On Friday the 17th the greater part of the Cabinet were assembled at Windsor for the Council ; and before the King arrived, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Carlisle, and Mr. Tierney expressed to me in the strongest manner their difficulties and objections in regard to Mr. Herries's appointment, partly on parliamentary grounds as to lead in the

House of Commons, whenever Mr. Huskisson might chance to be absent, partly on account of the manner in which it was done, and partly on account of its being inconsistent with the principle of forming the Cabinet out of its existing materials, as far as possible. It is needless to recapitulate the discussion which took place between us: it showed, however, that if the appointment were to take place at that time, the most serious embarrassments would ensue: and after various interviews, the King finally agreed that the matter should be suspended till Mr. Huskisson's return, which proposition was suggested to me by Lord Lansdowne and others as the middle term through the means of which the thing might be brought right.

[GODERICH.]



APPENDIX II  
THE CRIMEAN WAR—TERMS OF PEACE  
(Vol. I, pp. 92-5)

7 EASTERN TERRACE, BRIGHTON, 30th Novr. 1855.

MY DEAR MR. FORSTER,—You asked me yesterday to put down for you on paper my thoughts regarding the terms on which it would at this moment be possible to make peace with Russia, and I now take up my pen to endeavour to do so. I must, however, begin by saying that the present does not seem to me to be in many respects a favourable time to make peace. It is true that we have taken the south side of Sebastopol; but the military operation which was commenced when we invaded the Crimea cannot yet be considered as brought to an end—it is evident, as I may have occasion to shew presently, that the next campaign, if it be conducted with tolerable activity and wisdom, must of itself afford a solution to many of the questions which would have to be discussed whenever negotiations for peace might be resumed, which the operations of the end of this campaign at Kenbaru and in Transcaucasia have opened, but which they have left perfectly unsettled, and which must from their nature be settled more clearly, and therefore more satisfactorily, on the field of battle than by the tortuous and doubtful process of protocols and conferences—and to this we must add that we may fairly expect to be able next year, both from the nature of the military operations before us and from the condition in which the English Army ought to be at the commencement of the approaching campaign, to bring to bear upon Russia the full weight of the power of the Allies in a much more satisfactory manner than we have done since we sat down before Sebastopol. For these reasons it seems to me that the present is not the moment which would be most favourable to the Allies for the conclusion of peace, and in addition to them we must recollect that whereas the next campaign must, now that we are clear of the *siege* of Sebastopol, shew us in what

spirit the war is being conducted by our Government, we are at present walking in the dark on that subject, and have not, therefore, unsatisfactory as such a state of things may be, the means of judging whether that spirit is one with which we should wish to see the people of England sympathize, and which ought to induce us to continue to support the war, or whether, from the manner in which it is being played, *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. But, in spite of all this, I do not for a moment doubt that, if we could not conclude a satisfactory peace, one which would be worth the efforts we have made, and would afford us a reasonable security for the future, we ought to do so at once, and I am quite ready therefore to discuss the question of what the terms of such a peace would be.

For this purpose it will be best to consider what is the object of the present war. Bright says it is and always has been objectless. Gladstone tells us that it once had a noble and worthy object, which it has now lost altogether; and they both tauntingly ask those who support the continuance of the war, "What do you want, and what are you fighting for?" It has never seemed to me that this question was so difficult to answer. I believe that the English nation, by which I mean neither the Aberdeen Gov<sup>t</sup> or the House of Commons nor any particular party or section; but the aggregate of the intelligence and authority of the people, which went to war with such rare unanimity, did so in order to maintain in the present and to secure as far as possible for the future "the integrity and independence" not of Turkey only, but of Europe. No doubt a just and righteous indignation against the flagrant aggression of the strong against the weak, and against the double dealings and false pretences of the late Czar's policy, gave strength to the war feeling and roused the anger of the nation; but I believe that it is an error to say it was merely for *Turkey* that we engaged in this war. We engaged in it at least equally for ourselves. One last act of Russian encroachment opened our unwilling eyes suddenly to the advances she had made and the policy she had steadily pursued during the last century, and we became convinced that the time had come when we must place ourselves in firm opposition to that policy or be prepared to succumb to its fatal influence. If we could have saved Turkey without war, and before the Pruth was crossed have averted the contest by restoring a good understanding between the Czar

and the Sultan on the footing which existed before the Menchikoff mission, such an arrangement might then have sufficed, although it would only have postponed the inevitable struggle ; but now that that struggle has begun, that blood has been shed so freely in the contest, we owe it to those who have fallen, we owe it to our children, not to conclude it while we are not forced to do so by ill fortune, until we can make a peace which will give us reasonable ground to hope that we have stayed for years to come the tide of Russian advance and Russian influence, if we have not been able to roll it backward. What we require, then, is to place barriers to that advance which are likely to be able, when once erected firmly, to arrest its further progress, more especially in those directions in which it has of late been most threatening. I do not believe that, whatever may be the sympathy which is felt in England for Poland or for the Nationalities, there is any spirit in the country which would back a war carried on for the purpose of restoring them to independence, and I will, therefore, at all events for the present, leave those questions aside, as they have not yet arisen out of the war itself, and confine myself to considering how we might now, in the present state of things, secure the object of the war, as I have above defined. There is, however, one other consideration to which it is our duty strictly to attend in any negotiations into which we may enter, and that is the manner in which the arrangements we may propose to make will affect the various less powerful peoples with whom we shall have more or less to do. I trust that there is little chance of our now acting as we did in 1815 and indulging in the fatal *mistake*, as well as crime, of supposing that we can righteously or indeed safely treat such populations as if they were only, to use Metternich's phrase when speaking of Italy, "geographical expressions"—by acting in that manner in '15 the Diplomats who drew up the Treaties of Vienna sowed the seeds of all the present complications and difficulties of Central and Southern Europe, and it would be folly as well as wickedness in us if we were again to follow in that path.

With these views, then, as to the objects of the war, and the considerations which ought to guide us in endeavouring to obtain them, let us now proceed to take a survey of the different countries which have of late been threatened by Russia, or which have become during the progress of the war the seat of hostilities. And first as to the Danubian Provinces. It was their invasion

which at last led to the actual appeal to arms ; they have been for years the scene of Russian intrigue, and from time to time have been actually occupied by Russian troops ; and while their peculiar relation to the Porte will prove, as I believe, a great facility for making now a satisfactory arrangement with respect to them, and will, if wisely used, afford in the future a great security to Turkey, it has hitherto been taken advantage of by Russia, and has afforded a pretext for that ever-increasing Protectorate which has been a greater curse to the Provinces protected than injury to the Porte. With regard to these provinces our duty is, I think, clear, although we have rendered its accomplishment more difficult than it need have been by our intense folly in letting the Austrians in to them. We must abolish *all* Protectorate—we must get rid of the Règlement Organique of 1851 dictated by Russia—we must revert to the terms of the ancient Capitulations between the Provinces and the Porte, which still form the sole legal ground of their connection, and which fully guarantee to the former their autonomy and independence, with the single exception of the *formal* acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the Sultan and the payment of a fixed annual tribute—we must in order to strengthen them unite the two provinces into one and see established there a constitution suited to the wishes and character of the people and capable of affording to them a standing point from which to resist the pressure both of Russia and Austria. Looking at all the elements at present existing, at the remarkable assistance afforded by the very terms of the old Capitulations, and at the lessons which we are taught by, and the experience which we may derive from, the revolution of 1848 and the previous history of these provinces, I do not think that there would be any real difficulty in effecting this ; but as we love justice and the honour of England, and desire that our work should be stable, we must avoid every semblance of that wicked subservience to Austria, and in truth to Russia, which disgraced the settlement of the Four Points at the Vienna Conference by the introduction of the clause which provided that “ the Sublime Porte will enjoin on the Principalities not to tolerate in their territory such foreigners as have been above described ” (i.e. those “ whose proceedings may be prejudicial either to the tranquillity of those countries or to the interests of neighbouring States ”), “ nor to allow *the local inhabitants* to meddle with matters dangerous to

the tranquillity of *their own country* or of neighbouring States." I think that we ought to retain the suzerainty of the Sultan over these countries, confining it, however strictly, within the limits of the old capitulations, because I believe that we shall thus most easily bring them under the European Guarantee of the Turkish territories, while by getting rid of the Protectorate we get rid of all pretence for Russian interference or occupation ; and because that suzerainty has never of late years been objected to by the people of the Provinces ; but was, on the contrary, acknowledged and admitted by them in a most remarkable manner in 1848. I might be inclined to advocate a different arrangement if another campaign were to put Bessarabia into the hands of the Allies, and we were to find that the Roumanian element in that country still predominated over the Slave, a matter of fact as to which we have not at this moment, at least as far as I know, sufficient evidence to act upon ; but if we make peace before we obtain possession of that country and acquire that knowledge, I should adhere to the Turkish suzerainty. A Roumanian nation consisting of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bessarabia would be able to maintain its own independence in a very different manner from one whose territory stopt at the Pruth—and I do not say, partly from want of the knowledge to which I have alluded, and partly because I wish here to put the terms of peace as low as possible, I would make the cession of Bessarabia, under present circumstances, a *sine qua non* of peace. But in addition to insisting on the adoption of these internal arrangements for the Danubian Provinces, which ought indeed to be settled and carried into effect at once without waiting for any negotiations with Russia, I would demand the cession of the country to the south of the *Kilia* (the northernmost mouth of the Danube), thus freeing the Sulina and St. George mouths from Russian interference, and also of the town of Reni at the juncture of the Danube and the Pruth. It is true that this latter place is on the left (Russian) bank of the river ; but it is on the *united* river itself, before the division of its mouths, and if it were left in the hands of Russia she might still pretend to claim a right to levy dues, or in some way to interfere with the navigation ; add to which that I should like the Roumans thus to get a *tête de pont* in Bessarabia. To this I would willingly add the cession of Ismail, Tulschba, and Kilia (the town) ; but if we do not make Bessarabia a *sine qua non*, we

could not do so either in the case of these towns—and, indeed, I do not know that Reni would be worth fighting for—but the country south of the Kilia mouth we must get away from Russia. You will perhaps observe that I say nothing of Servia, although that country was included among those dealt with under the First Point at Vienna. I do so on purpose—the best thing we can do for Servia is to leave her alone—she stands in a totally different position from the Danubian Provinces; her constitution, her history is quite unlike theirs; all she wants is not to be meddled with, and we have no rights and no business to interfere in her affairs. We come, then, now to the Black Sea and the Crimea. As to the latter, I need hardly say that before we make peace we must blow up Sebastopol, and destroy its docks, fortifications, etc.; but what are we to do with the Crimea itself? If we make peace now, I cannot doubt that the only thing we *can* do with it is to give it back to Russia. The idea of giving it to Sardinia is sheer nonsense. Keep it we, France and England, cannot, nor can the Porte, except as part of much larger territorial changes than those we are in a condition to insist upon. I see, therefore, no alternative but to evacuate it, after all the other arrangements of the peace have been fully carried out. Sebastopol destroyed cannot be restored for a long period of time, even supposing Russia were to find means of evading the clause, which of course any treaty would contain, forbidding its reconstruction; and in the meantime the Allies should take measures in the Treaty for the fortification of the Bosphorus, which might be easily, I believe, rendered safe from a *coup de main*. But then comes the question of the Black Sea and the Russian Fleet. The proposition of limitation is but a poor one, and undoubtedly very difficult to enforce; the scheme for the “commercialization” of the Black Sea, prohibiting the presence there of any ships of war, or the maintenance of any fortresses on its shores, is far better than that—but even this scheme is liable to grave objection; for it cannot be a satisfactory arrangement by which a prohibition is laid on independent states to keep ships of war and to build forts on their own territories. If I could get all I want in Asia, I should be content to leave the question of the Fleets alone as to the future, now that Sebastopol is taken and its Fleet destroyed; but if I could not, I incline to think that the “commercialization” scheme ought to be adopted. This then brings me to Asia, with respect to

which I must say at once, hoping that you will not be too much frightened, that I believe the only thing which would give real security to Turkey and which would put a stop at once to Russian progress *in the East* would be the making the Caucasus the southern boundary of Russia in these parts. A sound and strong organization of the Principalities on the one hand and the cession of the countries now held by the Czar south of the Caucasus on the other would, as it seems to me, really satisfy our just requirements and secure the object for which we are fighting as far as the South and East are concerned. In this perhaps you will agree ; but you will ask what I should propose to do with these Asiatic provinces when I got them. I admit to answer this question is not easy, that the task of organizing these provinces would be a difficult one ; but I believe that the question can be answered : I am sure that it would be a noble one, the results of which would be fraught with vast future good to the X<sup>th</sup> races of these countries and to the civilization of Asia. It would be a task worthy of great statesmen and of peculiar importance and interest to England. The arrangement I should propose at present would be this. I would divide the districts to be ceded by Russia into two countries, Georgia, which would include Mingrelia and Imeritia and Armenia, adding to this latter the Armenian provinces round Lake Van now under Turkish rule. I should thus get two states, which I would place under the suzerainty of Turkey, and connect with the Porte after the manner of Servia, leaving them their full internal interdependence, their municipal system, which is now in full action, and giving the Sultan no more power over them than that of receiving a fixed tribute in return of the protection of his troops and of his name in case of need. I propose this Turkish suzerainty merely because I think it doubtful whether these two states would at first be able to walk alone, while I leave them the fullest means of development in the future. You will not fail to remark that I thus also greatly increase the independence and better the condition of *Turkish Armenia*, which I propose to join to what is now Russian Armenia—and I am strongly inclined to think that the means would not be wanting of rendering this arrangement a stable one. Read Hasthausen's Transcaucasia attentively, and you will see that the Russian rule is distinctly and definitely unpopular in Georgia, where it has introduced serfdom ; and that in Armenia the best thing

which M. von Hasthausen can recommend the Russians to do is to leave the Armenians alone. Now M. von H. is a friend of Russia, inclined to think that she has a mission to spread civilization in the East, and yet these are the admissions which he makes and the conclusions to which he comes. At the same time he thinks that the Armenian nation is really capable of a renewed existence, and he looks to it with hope as the source whence civilization is to spread in Asia under the ægis of Russian protection. Now both Layard and Rawlinson—very different men, with diverse views on many points concerning this war—agree in believing that the two countries of Georgia and Armenia are perfectly capable of maintaining an independent existence, and I feel therefore convinced that there can be no insurmountable difficulty in carrying out the much easier scheme which I propose, but which, like theirs, secures to these provinces full internal independence, religious freedom, and civil equality. If this letter had not already reached much greater length than I thought of when I began, I could enter into more details upon this part of the question, could shew, I think, how the peculiar position of Schamyl and his Mahometan followers is favourable to my plan, and could also develop the reasons why this policy appears to me to be peculiarly an English one. But I must not attempt this now—indeed, I feel that I must take quite a different course and only say what are the very lowest terms as to Asia which I think it would be possible to accept. They would be the cession to Turkey of Grouil (or Guria), the country south of the Phasis or Riou, and of the Fortress of Redout Kale, which would put an end to the Russian blockade of this coast and open Circassia to the advantages and influences of western commerce—but I admit that I should look on this as an unsatisfactory arrangement, and as leaving ample space for the farther extension of Russian influence in the East and for the continuance of the delusion, as it seems to me, that Russia, such at least as she now is, is likely to be the civilizing agent of the Oriental peoples. My larger plan would put an end to both these evils, and would at the same time, by securing internal independence to the Georgians and Armenians, give a fair chance to the Eastern Christians of shewing what power they possess of governing themselves. Thus, then, would I deal with the Asiatic portion of this question.

But there yet remains another part of the world into which



our arms have penetrated, and where we have found other traces of the designs of Russia—I mean the Baltic. The object for which the Isles of Aaland were being so strongly fortified can scarcely be doubted—and I think that we ought to insist on their being given up to Sweden, or at the very least on their never being again fortified or occupied militarily. I much prefer the former course to the latter, for this simple reason, that if it be adopted the thing to be done is done once for all, whereas if we follow the other, we shall find the stipulation difficult to enforce and likely to lead to future disputes. If the war were prolonged another year, and we could get Sweden to join us, I should gladly see her take possession of Finland, the loss of which to Russia wd. really go very far to secure us effectually for a long period from any danger from her power—but at present the cession of Finland is not, of course, in question. There is, however, one other point of much importance, with respect to which England and Lord Palmerston especially are much to blame, and which ought now if possible to be dealt with, and that is the question of the succession to the Danish Crown. I have not here the papers relating to it or a copy of the Treaty of London, as it is called ; but it is clear to me that it is quite impossible that we could ever tolerate the presence of a Russian Prince on the throne of Denmark ; and therefore, as it seems to me, the sooner under present circumstances that we say so the better.

Of course, I do not intend to say that the terms which I have sketched out here should not be liable to alteration, or that unless all the details be adopted no peace would be a good one ; but they contain my answer to your question, and I believe that unless they be adopted in their spirit we shall not obtain a safe and lasting peace. Let me then recapitulate them :—

1st. All existing treaties between Russia and the Porte to be swept away.

2nd. The Danubian Provinces to be united into one, under the suzerainty of the Porte, without any foreign protectorate, and with a constitution suited to the wants and wishes of the people of the country and liable to be amended by them, the *Règlement Organique* being altogether abolished.

3rd. The Navigation of the Danube to be free, and the country

south of the Kilia Mouth together with the Tête de Pont of Reni to be ceded to Turkey.

4th. Sebastopol to be destroyed and not rebuilt or the harbour used for military purposes, and the Bosphorus fortified.

5th. The countries south of the Caucasus now in the possession of Russia to be given up and to be formed into two States under Turkish suzerainty, with complete internal independence, Turkish Armenia being for this purpose united with the Armenian Provinces ceded by Russia.

6th. The Isles of Aaland to be ceded to Sweden.

7th. No Russian Prince to be allowed to succeed to the Danish throne.

8th. No Protectorate beyond such an one as has always been exercised of late years by our Ambassadors at Constantinople, the ordinary power, that is, of remonstrance to be exercised by any power over the Xtian subjects of the Porte.

I forgot to touch on this point before, but it is not necessary that I should say more on it than that a formal Protectorate, such as was proposed by the Vienna Conference, would be sure to open the door to endless intrigues on the part of Russia and to constant rivalry between her and France as protectors of the Greek and Latin churches. As I have said above, if I could not get all I ask for in No. 5, I should be prepared, tho' unwillingly, to take the less satisfactory arrangement I have before spoken of, but in that case I should propose to insist on the "commercialization" of the Black Sea.

As to Bessarabia, I reserve that till we see the result of next campaign, should another campaign take place; but at present I should say nothing about it, although it is clear that its cession by the Porte to Russia at the Peace of Bucharest would have been declared illegal and *ultra vires* in any Court of Justice, it being quite contrary to the letter and the spirit of the capitulations. I need hardly say that I have not touched here on many matters which I desire earnestly to see dealt with at the peace, and which must be dealt with sooner or later. I do not believe that Europe will obtain a reasonable probability of prolonged tranquillity so long as the present territorial arrangements remain unchanged—from the very commencement of this war the names of Italy, Hungary, and Poland have been in every man's mouth—sympathy for those nations has had much to do with the

popularity of the war, and everyone who desires their freedom has had a feeling, vague perhaps and undefined, but still strong, that it would result sooner or later from this contest. It is therefore to me very painful, I confess, to feel myself compelled to say that I would accept terms of peace by which nothing would be done for any of those countries; but I cannot help feeling that, from the way in which this war and its diplomatic affairs have been conducted, and from the nature of the alliances and quasi-alliances in which we are involved, any general and permanent resettlements of Europe cannot be looked for unless the war be greatly prolonged. If it be prolonged such a resettlement must, I believe, take place at the ultimate peace; but we are not fighting now to obtain it, and I am not prepared to say that we should change the present object of the contest for this other and larger one, or indeed that we could do it—and I am confirmed in this opinion by the fact that, when one looks carefully at, and examines thoughtfully, the cases of the three countries to which I have alluded, one feels that they are each distinct, that they are by no means parallel, and that the settlement of them presents very different degrees of practicability. As to Italy, I see little difficulty if we can get France to go with us; the admirable position of Piedmont and her steady progress are fast solving that problem of themselves, and I rejoice to feel that the battle of freedom is really being fought now in the Crimea. Hungary again presents more difficulties—we have there to deal with conflicting nationalities, and we cannot stir a step to aid her actively unless we are prepared for the destruction of the Austrian Empire, an event over which I for one should shed no tear, but which would involve consequences of the most serious nature if brought about by the Allies. The independence of the Lombardo-Venetian Provinces does not necessarily entail the destruction of the Austrian Empire, but if to this you add the independence of Hungary that Empire is of course at end. At an end it will at last be, I do not doubt, but Kossuth's recent acts do not encourage one to make it a main object of this war. But with Hungary we have an advantage which we do not possess with regard to Poland. We have every reason to believe in the case of the former that she is able to win and obtain her independence as against Austria, but of the present state of the Polish people we in fact know little. We do not know whether they wld. rise *as a nation*, still less

do we know whether they cld. stand alone, if we put them on their feet—and one cannot therefore help feeling the great responsibility which would rest upon us, both towards them and towards our own people, if we entered upon the question of reconstituting the Polish nation.

Every wound we inflict upon Russia is really a gain for “the Nationalities.” A peace which should lessen her prestige and crush her power would advance their cause incalculably; but in the present state of Europe and with our actual alliances it seems to me that every reasonable man must hesitate before he fires that train, the explosion of which would render peace impossible for years, and would create at once a new set of relations such as no statesmen with whom we are blessed are fit to deal with. If the war lasts, these great questions must be faced, and the moment the necessity arrived I wld. fire the mine and rejoice that the time had come; but war is far too solemn a thing to be played with for the benefit of any theories, and until the necessity of raising this question was forced upon us by the actual circumstances of the moment, I should not dare to refuse peace even in the hope of hastening the hour when the wrongs of 1815 may be finally redressed.

Such, then, are my thoughts as to the terms of peace which we might at this moment accept. The subject is so vast that although this letter has already grown to an altogether unexpected length I have but touched lightly on the various portions of it, and I feel that many developments are wanting to place my views fairly before you; but I think you will be able to gather from what I have written what those views generally are; and your own knowledge of the subject will enable you to fill up the outline, which I have but lightly sketched out.

I must end by repeating as I did when I began, that I am strongly impressed with the conviction that we shall be likely to get much better terms after another campaign than now, if we act wisely. That campaign ought to settle for us the question of Bessarabia, and to place in our hands the Transcaucasian provinces. It ought to force Austria to declare herself, and thus forward the interests of Italy, for whichever side the Court of Vienna may decide at last to join an active participation in the war will render it very difficult for her to retain her hold on Lombardy and Venice. If she goes against us, they are lost to her at once; if for us, she offends and alienates the only

Power which will ever be able to aid her to hold them, while she will embarrass still farther her bankrupt exchequer, and at the peace may be made to purchase our future support against Russia by a cession of her Italian possessions. Her present position is the only one which can suit her interest, and the continuance of the war for another year must almost inevitably force her from it. Again, if the war continue for that time, the question of the Principalities must be settled, and it ought to be settled before negotiations for peace begin. To set against these advantages, there is but one danger apart from the immense evil of the shedding of more blood, and that is that we may find that we are so bound to France and France to Austria that every righteous and reasonable object of the war may be frustrated by that mischievous Power. That is a possible danger, and unhappily we do not really know how we stand; but even in this respect the next campaign must place us in a better position than we are now in; for it will shew us clearly what are the real objects and views and principles of the French and English Governments, so that by next summer we shall be able to judge whether the war be really one to defend all that is valuable in Europe, intellectual, commercial, and political freedom, the essence of our civilization and the hopes of our future, against the danger of being overwhelmed by a Power whose very principle is antagonistic to these our noblest possessions, or whether we are merely being made to fight to keep Louis Napoleon on the throne of France and Lord Palmerston in Downing St. As yet I see ground to hope that the former is the object of our Gov<sup>t</sup>, though, alas, I cannot but feel that it is not impossible that it may but be the second—and I am therefore prepared in the strength of that hope, which the events of next year must either justify or destroy, to acquiesce in the continuance of the war, at all events until such terms as I have sketched in this letter shall have been obtained.

Perhaps I should say one word on a point to which you alluded when I saw you the other day—the position of inferiority in which we now stand with regard to France. You seemed to fear that that inferiority might increase during the next campaign. I cannot think so; on the contrary, I think we may reasonably hope that our Army will be in a better position next Spring than it has yet been since the war began, and that the military events of next year will shew

that we are still the nation which beat the French in the Peninsula.

I must not in writing to you say one word, I am sure, in excuse for having passed over in silence the "four points." They have never been accepted by the English nation; they are not the least binding on us since the breaking up of the Vienna Conferences, and the best thing we can do with regard to them is to forget that any such monuments of the folly of our statesmen have ever existed. I wish this long letter were better worth yr. reading. I have, as you will see by the corrections, written it continuously and without any special thought beyond that which, as every other Englishman has done, I have given unceasingly to this subject since the war began. You must therefore kindly excuse the many imperfections of the letter, which I only hope may afford you subject for thought, and if you will let me know how far you agree or disagree with its contents you will greatly oblige,

Yrs. most sincerely, GODERICH.

APPENDIX III  
PARLIAMENTARY REFORM IN 1858  
(Vol. I, pp. 141-42)

[PRIVATE]

PUTNEY HEATH, S.W., 23 Dec. 1858.

MY DEAR GLYN,— . . . You ask me to tell you what shape I think the new Reform Bill ought to assume, & I am not sorry to avail myself of the opportunity, which your question affords me, of putting my opinions on that subject into a definite form. Every Bill for Parliamentary Reform brought in at this time must deal with two distinct points, the Distribution of Members & the Extension of the Suffrage, & I will therefore give you my views on each of them separately.

It seems to be the general opinion that the character of any Bill which may be submitted to the House of Commons will be chiefly determined by the manner in which it may deal with the first of these questions. In this I entirely agree, as I am convinced that the degree to which the Suffrage may be extended with safety will depend upon the way in which the seats rendered vacant by disfranchisement are disposed of. It is universally admitted, I conceive, that some disfranchisement must take place. I am not prepared with a precise Schedule on this part of the subject; but I take it for granted that, if we move in the matter at all, we must place a considerable number of seats at our disposal. I do not, however, wish to see the right to return Members confined exclusively to the counties & very large towns. Boroughs of moderate size ought to be retained to a certain extent for reasons to which I may have occasion to advert presently; but the smaller places, especially those completely under the influence of one man *must* be deprived of one or both of their Members.

Having thus obtained a number of disposable seats, how shall they be distributed? Not to the counties, say I, except in a very few instances such as the West Riding & South Lancashire.

The Landed Interest is in almost exclusive possession of the House of Lords; its natural tendencies are & always must be strictly conservative, & if we wish our legislative machine to work at all, we *must* keep the majority of the other House thoroughly progressive. But on the other hand I would not give a large number of Members to any one town. Three, or at the outside four, is the greatest number that one set of electors can choose properly. If you give more, you will render some kind of American Caucus system inevitable, & people will be obliged to vote *by lists*, on which the last names will probably be very inferior ones, carried in by the reputation of the one or two at the head. I would therefore only give one additional Member even to such places as Leeds or Manchester; for I should also very much dislike to see constituencies of that kind cut up into separate districts for electoral purposes. By any plan of that sort you would lose all unity in the constituency, & all the advantage which results from the pride which the inhabitants of important towns generally take in having them properly represented, & you would, as I believe, at once greatly increase the numbers of Cox's & Ayrtons in the House, who are elected now by the Metropolitan Boroughs very much because those districts want that unity & that combination of all classes which is to be found where you have the whole of the electors of a great town forming one single constituency. I would not "group" small towns. It would give rise to endless petty local jealousies & quarrels & tend directly to "electoral districts," the most revolutionary of all schemes of Parliamentary Reform. A few second Members may be bestowed on places of considerable size having now only one; but the great majority of the disposable seats should, in my opinion, be given to the largest *unrepresented towns*, taking care, however, so to distribute them as not to throw their whole weight into the Manufacturing scale. That would not, I think, be fair; but it might easily be avoided by enfranchising places, like Doncaster for example, which are very much connected with the Agricultural interest. But besides this, I would above all things give Members to the University of London, to the Scotch Universities, & if possible, to the "godless" Colleges in Ireland. I shall have a word or two to say hereafter about the idea of an educational franchise; but the objects sought to be gained by it may be in part obtained by enfranchising these bodies, & I am sure that they



would generally return men likely to be useful in the House of Commons, while they would also serve as some counterpoise to the increase which must of necessity be made in the representatives of mere numbers. I was at one time much attracted by the "minority clause," as it was called, of the Bill of 1854, & I am still not at all insensible to the arguments which may be adduced in favour of some scheme of the kind; but the more I reflect on the subject, the less do I think that such a plan would work well in practice, & I am quite sure that it would render necessary a greatly increased amount of "management" by Agents & such like people at every contested election.

Such, then, would be my general scheme for the redistribution of Members. And now as to the Suffrage; I quite agree with those who say that it is important not to swamp all other classes by the votes of the most numerous one, but I apply the observation to the House of Commons as a whole, & not to each particular constituency. I should care little if the upper & middle classes in some large towns were occasionally outvoted by the working classes, provided the general balance were maintained by the result of elections in other places; & this is one of the reasons why I attach so much importance to the distribution of Members, & desire to retain a considerable number of moderate-sized boroughs. It seems to me absolutely necessary that in any extension of the suffrage now made, care should be taken to admit to the right of voting the upper portion of the working classes. They are now fully entitled by their intelligence & political knowledge to have votes, & if we pass any Reform Bill at all it would be neither safe nor just to exclude them. I feel strongly on this point & should be glad to see them return some candidates of their own choice to every Parliament. But I am opposed to all schemes of class representation as such. They would never answer; neither would a number of complicated "fancy" suffrages succeed. They would be very unpopular & extremely difficult to work in practice. We must have a simple intelligible system, if we do not wish to be perpetually tinkering at it after it has been brought into operation. In the first place, therefore, I would keep up a difference, such as now exists, between the borough & county suffrage, on account of the real practical difference between the political intelligence of the town & country populations; and then, if I consulted my own opinion only, I should be quite ready to

accept the present *municipal* suffrage, *guarded as it now is*, for boroughs & a £10 household suffrage for counties. If, however, I had the task of introducing a Bill, which I should certainly not undertake like Bright, but only on condition of being "sent for" in the proper quarter, I should not make quite so extensive a proposal. I am thoroughly convinced that we ought not to pass a sham Bill, & that it is most important that any measure on which we may agree should be such an one as would enable us to take our stand on it for some time, & having improved our legislative machinery to set to work with it upon the many practical questions with which we ought to deal; but at the same time I do not think that the evils of the present electoral system are so great as to make it necessary, & if it be not necessary it would be most undesirable, to run the risk of proposing with any kind of authority a Bill to which neither the present House of Commons nor the House of Lords could be reasonably expected to give their consent, *provided it be possible otherwise to carry out the reforms really required*. Now I do not think that such an extension of the suffrage as I have alluded to above could be carried at present, but I do believe that one somewhat short of it might be passed which would equally effect my two great objects in respect to this part of the question, namely, the giving votes to the working class, & the counterbalancing to some extent the Chandos Clause in the counties by the enfranchisement of persons living in the country towns; & I should therefore be inclined, if I were "called in," to prescribe a £5 rental suffrage in boroughs and a £15 in counties. I would disfranchise all the corrupt old Freemen in towns, as such; but would retain unaltered the 40 shilling freehold suffrage in counties, which I believe to be in practice an excellent one. You ask me whether I consider an educational franchise impossible. I am afraid that I must say that in any direct shape I do, at present. I cannot think that any plan of examination would work well, heartily as I should like to see it adopted, if possible. I should, however, be quite willing to give votes *ipso facto* to the Graduates of any University & members of the Learned Professions, though I rather doubt if it would make much practical difference, & I am not sure whether we might not manage similarly to enfranchise certificated schoolmasters. If the latter could be done I should rejoice very much. I have a crotchet of my own, which in the event

of any considerable extension of the suffrage I think would not be unimportant, especially in its tendency to raise the value of a vote (I do not mean in the market) & to give an increased sense of responsibility to the voter. I would deprive every one convicted of crime & every fraudulent bankrupt of the right of voting for the rest of his life. There is one point of great importance on which I have not touched. I allude to the difficulty felt now, & likely to be more felt in proportion as the number of small boroughs is decreased, of finding seats for men whose presence in the House of Commons would be very useful, but who, either from their not choosing to pronounce the precise shibboleth of any particular party, or from their having lived chiefly out of England, as in the case of Indian public servants, are not generally acceptable to the electors of large constituencies. I admit the difficulty & lament it very much; but I confess myself at present unable to propose any remedy which would have a shadow of a chance of being adopted, except such as may be found in granting of the right of returning Members to those universities & colleges which do not at present possess it. We have here, however, a strong argument for retaining as many of the smaller boroughs as we fairly and honestly can. I say nothing about the ballot, of which you know I am in favour, because I look upon it as a mere piece of election machinery, which there is no chance of carrying as yet, & which we ought not to make a *sine qua non*. As to the shortening of the duration of Parliaments, it is all nonsense & ought to be opposed. I am afraid that I have inflicted upon you a terribly long epistle, but I was anxious if I wrote at all on this subject to give you my views on it fully. I hope that they may meet with your approval in the main, and

I am, yours very sincerely, GODERICH.

## APPENDIX IV

### WAR OFFICE REFORM

(Vol. I, Cap. IX)

[CONFIDENTIAL]

*Earl de Grey and Ripon's Scheme of War Office Reorganization*  
(1860)

MR. HERBERT,—Having in accordance with your directions carefully considered what arrangements should be adopted for improving the organization of the War Office, and rendering it as well suited as possible for carrying on the complicated and important business with which the Sec. of State for War has to deal, I have now to submit for your consideration the following observations.

The inquiry may be conveniently divided into two branches; the first relating to the organization of the Office, properly so called, to the Departments of which it should be composed and to the mode in which the work should be distributed between those Departments, and the other having reference to the manner in which the business should be transacted in the Office generally and to such questions as the practice of Minuting, the system of Registry, etc. etc.

*1st. As to the general organization of the Office.*

The business of the War Office is very great in amount and very varied in character.

The Army Estimates, including those for the Militia, have now reached the vast amount of 15 millions, and consequently the financial business alone is of great magnitude and importance.

But, besides regulating and checking the expenditure of this large sum, the Sec. of State for War is charged with the duty of manufacturing and supplying the munitions of war for the Army, of considering and deciding on every improvement in warlike material, of clothing, feeding, and lodging an Army of 220,000 men scattered all over the world, of erecting and main-

taining fortifications and buildings, of arming and clothing 120,000 Militia, of regulating and supplying with arms nearly 150,000 Volunteers, of organizing and directing politically all military expeditions and warlike operations, and of providing for the defence both of the Mother Country and of her Colonies and Dependencies.

The mere enumeration of such functions shows over how large a field the supervision and responsibility of the Sec. of State for War extends, and, in considering the nature of his duties, it must be borne in mind that the War Office is essentially an Office of detail, and that there are innumerable questions which, though small in themselves, are constantly submitted to the Sec. of State, and are of such a nature that they ought not to be decided except by some person holding a high and responsible office ; either because the decision which may be given in respect to them will serve as a precedent for many other cases, or on account of the position of the persons concerned, or of the expenditure of public money involved.

The business of the Office is at present steadily increasing, there seems no probability of its being diminished, and it has already reached a point at which, with the present organization, the Sec. of State is burdened with an amount of work almost overwhelming, when added to his other duties as a Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament, and which it is nearly impossible to suppose that any man could get through at all if the pressure and strain of a war were suddenly to be cast upon him.

It is therefore of the first importance that arrangements should be made which will relieve the Sec. of State from some of the work at present thrown upon him, and which will secure that nothing but matters of real importance are brought before him, and that they are presented to him in a form ripe for decision, and accompanied by the opinions of men well qualified to advise upon all that may be technical or special in connection with them.

The best mode of attaining this object seems to be that the Sec. of State should be surrounded by a certain number of highly responsible Officers placed at the head of great Departments of the Office, selected for their professional and technical knowledge, and having each a well-defined sphere of duty entrusted to him.

Each of them should communicate direct with the Sec. of State (or with his Deputy, the Parly. Under Sec.), and they should be always at hand to take his orders and give him their advice.

The propriety of such an organization will become evident when it is remembered that the present War Office has been formed from the union of several Departments which were formerly separate, and which, though it was necessary to bring them under one controlling head, still represent great and distinct branches of our military administration; and that the Sec. of State has to deal with many questions of a scientific and technically military character, on which a civilian Minister, or indeed a military man, even should he be a great General of large experience, stands in need of the best professional advice—advice which will always be better given by men who will be charged afterwards with carrying out in detail what they have recommended, than by mere amateur counsellors called in for the nonce.

It must also be borne in mind that the Army [W.O. ?] is looked at askance by the Army as the *Civilian* Office as compared with the Horse Guards, and that the presence of some distinguished military men there is as desirable for the sake of giving confidence to the Army as it is for the purpose of surrounding the Sec. of State with good professional advisers.

The Sec. of State in this country will generally be a civilian, and there are several strong reasons in favour of his being so; but this renders it the more important that he should have close to him in his own Office soldiers of experience and knowledge, ready to afford him their counsel and to assist in carrying out his decisions.

It can scarcely be necessary to dilate on the importance of having the great Departs. into which the War Office is divided clearly and well defined. In so large an office dealing with so many subjects the necessity of a good division of labour is self-evident, and it is no less indispensable that every Officer at the head of a Depart. should have a distinct and definite responsibility and be really answerable for the good and efficient management of the Depart. under his charge. The general responsibility of the Sec. of State or of an Under Secy. having the supervision of several Departs. embracing a great variety of branches will never practically secure the quick and accurate despatch of business in such an Office.

Let us see, then, how far the present arrangements of the Office conform to this idea of what they should be.

Immediately below the Sec. of State and, practically speaking, on an equality with each other, but above all other persons in the Office, are at present four Officers: the Parliamentary Under Secretary, the Permanent Under Secretary, the Secretary for Military Correspondence, and the Assistant Under Secretary, three civilians and one soldier. Among them is divided the work of the Office.

The Parliamentary Under Sec. takes Militia, Volunteers, and Clothing Papers; the Sec. for Military Correspondence has a well-defined Depart. connected with Promotions, Rewards, Pensions, and the correspondence with the Horse Guards; and all the rest of the work, the internal administration of the Office, the management of its finances, questions relating to the manufacture and supply of warlike material, to the charge and issue of Stores, to Fortifications and Buildings, to the Commissariat, to Transport, etc. etc., are divided, almost at random, between the two remaining officers, the Permanent Under Secretary and the Asst. Under Secretary. The result is that while the responsibility of the Sec. of State's scientific military advisers is lessened and impaired, that which is substituted for it is of too wild, indefinite, and unprofessional a character to secure a completely satisfactory supervision of several of the great Departs. of the Office.

These are not satisfactory arrangements. How, then, are they to be improved? Into what Departs. should the Office be divided? The answer to this question is not difficult, and the proper division may be determined by a simple analysis of the work to be done.

1st. The duty of providing warlike material for the Army, and of seeing that it is of the best description which modern science can invent, is fully sufficient to occupy the whole time of a Depart., at the head of which should be one of the best scientific Artillery Officers the Service can furnish. He should have the general supervision of the Establishment at Woolwich, Enfield, and Waltham Abbey, he should be the adviser of the Sec. of State on all Artillery questions, and the Ordnance Select Committee should report through him, although they should be an independent body having purely judicial functions.

At present Col. St. George, the President of the Ordnance

Select Committee, is held to be the Artillery Adviser of the Sec. of State, but he has nothing to do with the provision or manufacture of material, and his duties as President of the O.S.C. are quite inconsistent with those of Artillery Adviser, as in the latter capacity he is frequently called upon to propose measures, or give opinions on inventions which afterwards come before him or the Committee, as it were, judicially. This arrangement has always been considered as only provisional, and it is one which will never work well.

The House of Commons Committee on Military Organization felt that the Secretary of State ought to have near him an Artillery Officer of eminence to advise him as to many technical and scientific questions which are constantly being brought before him relating to Armaments, to Manufacture, and to Inventions; and it is needless to dwell upon the necessity of an arrangement of such manifest advantage to the Public Service.

2nd. Fortifications and Buildings form another branch by itself, separate from all others, and with well-defined duties. It should always be presided over by an eminent Engineer Officer, who might retain the title of Inspector-General of Fortifications, or take that of Director of Works and Buildings, as might be thought most desirable.

He should advise the Sec. of State on all Engineering questions.

3rd. The Clothing and Feeding of the Army, the supply of Camp Equipage, etc., the superintendence of Transport, and the charge and issue of Stores, are, for the most part, duties which belong in France to the Office of the Intendant-General. In this country they are divided between the Commissariat and Store Departments, but they might with great advantage be combined, at all events in the War Office itself, under one head, who should be an Officer of rank, and who would take the general superintendence of all these cognate services in immediate subordination to the Sec. of State. Experience of the working of the present system shows that great advantage would be derived from placing the Commissariat and Store Departments and the supply of Clothing under the supervision of a Military Man.

Many jealousies which now exist would be avoided, the Army would be better satisfied, and in the frequent cases of dispute



between Commissariat or Store Officers, and General Officers Commanding Districts or on Foreign Stations, the Sec. of State would ensure, with greater certainty, that both sides of the question are fairly considered than is now possible, when a Non-Military Officer at the head of these respective branches reports, through a Civilian Permanent Under Secretary, to a Civilian Minister.

The superintendence of a Military Man would also be very useful in the Clothing Depart. At present that Branch reports to the Parliamentary Under Secretary, who most likely knows little of questions of that kind, which are generally presented to him in the shape of small details ; and the result is that the Branch is practically left almost entirely to the management of the Assistant Director of Stores and Clothing.

It would give great satisfaction to the Army to see a soldier overlooking the Clothing Branch, and it would ensure more complete efficiency than exists at present.

The many questions relative to Land Transport, which arise whenever we have to undertake warlike operations, would be dealt with by this Officer ; the difficulties which are so constantly experienced in combining the duties of the Commissariat and the Military Train would be more easily overcome by a person in his position than is possible under the present divided system.

On all these subjects the advice of a Military Man having practical experience of the requirements of an Army in the Field and of a Regiment in Quarters would be of great advantage to the Sec. of State.

There are a great number of questions constantly arising in the ordinary course of business in respect to which such advice would be most useful, and would often save not only mistakes of other kinds, but also needless expenditure resulting from the want of real military knowledge and experience, and in time of war it would be invaluable to have a soldier in the War Office at the head of the Departs. of Supplies, Stores, and Transport. He might be called the Director of Supplies and Stores.

4th. The superintendence of all questions relating directly or indirectly to Promotions, Rewards, Pensions, and matters of Discipline, as far as they come before the War Office, and the conduct of the correspondence with the Horse Guards and General Officers in the Field, should always form, as it does now, a

distinct Department under a Military Officer. He might retain the name of Secretary for Military Correspondence. If the financial business of the Office were not placed under the Permanent Under Secretary it would probably be desirable that the Secretary for Military Correspondence should hand over to him the correspondence with the Colonial, Foreign, and other Offices, except the Horse Guards, but unless the Permanent Under Secretary were relieved from the supervision of the Accountant-General's Branch he could not undertake this additional duty.

5th. The large sums voted by Parliament show at once the necessity of having a great Account and Estimate Department, charged with most of the technical, apart from the political, functions of the former Sec. at War Office.

At the head of this Branch is now the Accountant-General, and if the Office were now to be organized for the first time, without any reference to past or existing arrangement, it would be desirable to make the financial branch a distinct and separate Depart. by itself. But, under present circumstances, there are many reasons which seem to render it better and more convenient to unite the general supervision of the War Office finances with the other duties of the Permanent Under Secretary of State, which are now to be described.

The four great Departs. of which we have first spoken would each be charged with very important duties, and divided from each other by well-defined lines of demarcation, but when they are established it will be necessary to take steps to secure that they should work harmoniously together, and that the union of authority, to obtain which our old system of Military Administration was abandoned, should be completely maintained.

To effect this would be one of the principal functions of the Permanent Under Secretary of State, whose duty it would be to manage the Office as an Office, to maintain its discipline, and to regulate the conduct of its business. He would be responsible for the internal administration of the Office, for the conduct of the Clerks, whom he would recommend to the Sec. of State for promotion. He should watch generally the proceedings of all the Departments, should see that one of them does not adopt a course inconsistent with that which is being followed in another, that each knows what the rest are about, and that all important

decisions, whether of the Sec. of State or of the Heads of Departments, are made known throughout the Office. He should take care that each Department keeps within its own province, and does not take steps affecting other Departments or relating to general questions without due communication and a proper reference to higher authority. He should be acquainted with all that passes in the Office, should see that its archives are properly kept and that records of Decisions are always taken both for the Office and in the several Departments. The Registry and the Librarian's Branches should be specially under him, and the Solicitor's, the Chaplain-General's, the Director of Contracts, the Educational Papers, and possibly some others of a similar kind, should be sent up to him. He should always be a Civilian.

It will be observed that nothing has, as yet, been said of the duties of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. They should be principally of a character quite distinct from those of the Heads of Departments. The Parliamentary Under Sec. should be the Deputy of the Sec. of State. It is almost impossible that the Minister can decide on all the multifarious questions on which a decision by one of the political Heads of the Office is held to be necessary, but of which many are not really of sufficient importance for him to be troubled with them, and it is therefore most desirable that he should have a coadjutor, in whom he has confidence, and to whom he can hand over a portion of the work which must otherwise fall to his own share.

With this view, all papers on which the Sec. of State's decision is required should be sent up, first, to the Parliamentary Under Secretary, and he should, by arrangement with his Chief, decide all such questions as he may consider it unnecessary to refer to the Minister. The precise division of work between the Sec. of State and the Parliamentary Under Secretary must, of course, depend upon their mutual relations, upon the Houses of Parliament of which they are respectively Members, and on the degree of confidence which the Minister may place in his subordinate. The important matter is that the Parliamentary Under Secretary should be regarded in the Office as the Coadjutor of the Sec. of State, and not merely as the Head of certain Branches. This opinion is held strongly by Mr. Godley.

In addition to these important functions it is desirable that the Parliamentary Under Secretary should retain a general

supervision over the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteer business on account of its peculiar nature, and of the position of the persons to be dealt with in connection with it, such as Lords Lieut., Colonels of Militia, etc., and the Inspectors-General of Militia and Volunteers should report to him.

No allusion has yet been made to the Army Medical Department. It is important that the Director-General should communicate whenever he thinks fit to the Sec. of State direct, but the general papers from his Branch might be sent up to the Permanent Under Secretary.

Under this system, therefore, the principal Officers of the War Office would be :

The Secretary of State.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State.

The Permanent Under Secretary of State—a Civilian.

The Secretary for Military Correspondence—a Military Officer.

The Director of Material—an Artillery Officer.

The Inspector-General of Fortifications—an Engineer Officer.

The Director of Supplies and Stores—a Military Officer.

And it remains to be considered whether these altered arrangements would lead to any material increase of expense.

At present there are a Secretary of State, a Parliamentary Under Secretary, a Permanent Under Secretary, a Secretary for Military Correspondence, and an Inspector-General of Fortifications, all of whom would remain unchanged as regards salary, although their attributions might be altered ; besides these there is an Assistant Under Secretary, whose office would on the proposed plan be abolished, and whose salary would go to pay that of the Director of Supplies and Stores. The only additional salary, therefore, would be that of the Director of Material, but it must not be looked upon as entirely an increase of charge ; for if such an Officer should not be appointed, and if Col. St. George remains in his present anomalous double character of President of the Ordnance Select Committee and Artillery Adviser of the Sec. of State, it will be impossible to continue to give him only the salary of the former office.

It may therefore be safely said that no increased expense of any importance will be caused by the changes suggested above.

It is now time to turn to the other head of this inquiry.

*2nd. The manner in which the business of the War Office should be transacted.*

It should first be considered how the functions of the different Heads of Departments may be best co-ordinated and made to work harmoniously. This would, in part, be effected by the Permanent Under Secretary, whose duty it would be, as above described, to see that every important decision of the Sec. of State (or of the Parliamentary Under Secretary acting for him) was communicated to all the Departments, and also that each Department kept the others informed of all matters of general interest with which it might have to deal. But these arrangements would not meet all cases. There are many questions which, *before decision*, ought to be considered by all the Departs. of the War Office, and looked at from every possible point of view. Now, this can only be done in one of two ways: either by sending the papers to all the Departs. and obtaining their opinion in the shape of Minutes, or bringing all the Heads of Departs. together and taking their advice on the subject collectively.

The former method is long, and, after all, imperfect, because it admits of no reply after the minute is once written, and gives an undue preponderance to the opinion of the Depart. from which the last minute issues. The latter mode would, therefore, be preferable; but it would not be necessary to establish a regular Board of the Heads of Departments holding periodical meetings. Attendance at such a Board would be a considerable interruption to the performance of daily work, and would lead to needless waste of time in talking. It would be sufficient for the Sec. of State or Parly. Under Sec. to call the Heads of Departs. together as occasion might arise, and to discuss with them the particular questions on which he wished to have their collective opinion. If the matter was one concerning only two or three Departs. the Heads of those Departs. alone should be summoned.

The next point of this kind in which a change is desirable is the practice of *Minuting*.

This is now carried to a great excess, and leads to needless delay and to the encumbering of Papers with unnecessary opinions, which it is troublesome and often useless to read through. All unnecessary Minutes should be forbidden. In simple cases it is quite useless, as is now often done, for one clerk to put the letter, or the paper to be dealt with, into

somewhat different language, and then for another to give his opinion on the subject, to be followed by those of the Head of the Division and the Head of the Branch, and then, not unfrequently, by further Minutes from the Asst. Und. Sec., the Permanent Und. Sec., and the Parly. Und. Sec.

Each of the great Departs. of the Office should be, as now, divided into Branches, and no one below the rank of Head of a Branch should give *his opinion* in a Minute, unless in some special case.

Any minutes written by clerks in a subordinate position should contain merely a *précis* of facts, precedents, or former decisions.

The Head of the Branch should give his opinion as concisely as possible, if necessary, and then pass the paper, if it is not one which he can himself decide, to the Head of the Depart. It should be clearly understood that long minutes are not the way to get on in the Office, and that a good *précis* or draft will be much more valued.

Minuting assumes its most objectionable form when it leads to the bandying about of a set of papers from one Depart. or Branch to another over and over again. This could almost always be avoided by a discussion of the point in question between the Heads of the Departs. or Branches concerned, and personal interviews of this kind should be adopted as much as possible, the result only being recorded.

Objections have been taken to the present General Registry, but, looking to the immense correspondence of the War Office, and to the difficulty of making persons outside understand to what Depart. they ought to write on a particular subject, it seems, on the whole, best to retain it. It should, however, be strengthened in order to secure despatch, and the Head of the Registry Branch, acting under the Permt. Under Sec., should exercise his discretion as to whom he should send each letter or paper to. No paper should be sent from the Registry to any person below a Head of a Branch, but whenever the matter appears to be one which the Head of the Depart. should see at once, or which he could decide without reference below, it should be referred direct to him; and, in pressing cases, papers should be sent straight to the Parly. Und. Sec. of State or to the Sec. of State.

A record of Decisions, properly indexed, should be kept in

each Depart., and there should also be a General Record of all decisions of the Sec. of State or of the Parly. Und. Sec., and of all Departmental decisions, which it may have been thought necessary to circulate through the Office.

The mode of transacting business between the War Office and the Horse Guards still remains to be considered.

It is assumed that it has been decided, in accordance with the Report of the Committee on Military Organization, that these two Offices are to continue distinct, and that their mutual relations, as at present existing in practice, are not to be substantially altered. There are then two points which should be mentioned, viz. : the formal meetings between the two Offices, now called "Saturday Meetings," and the mode of ordinary communication between them.

Meetings of the nature of the "Saturday Meetings" should be continued. They should consist of the Sec. of State, the Parly. Und. Sec., and the Heads of Departs. above described on the one side, and the Commr. in Chief, the Adjutant-General, and Quarter-Master-General on the other. The Sec. for Military Correspondence should act as Secretary.

This may be at first sight considered too numerous, but it could not be reduced with advantage. The Commr. in Chief could scarcely discuss questions satisfactorily without the aid of the Heads of the two great Military Departs. of the Horse Guards, though he might perhaps dispense with the attendance of the Military Secretary who now accompanies him; and, on the other hand, it often happens, at the present Saturday Meetings, that matters are not so fully discussed or so well decided as they would be if the Officers at the Head of the Manufacturing, the Engineering, and the Supply Departments were actually present.

Almost every question brought forward on these occasions has many bearings, and it would not be sufficient merely to call in these Heads of Departs. to discuss points which might seem directly to concern their respective branches of the Office.

As regards the ordinary communications between the two Offices, they should be carried on by minutes instead of letters, until each question was finally settled, when for the purpose of record a formal letter should be written.

Thus, if the Commr. in Chief requires the decision of the Sec. of State on any matter, a letter should, in the first instance,

be written from the Horse Guards to the War Office; if any points are to be suggested by the War Office for the consideration of the Horse Guards, or if further information is required on either side, the communication should be carried on by minutes on the actual papers, and nothing but the final decision should be communicated by letter.

If this plan were adopted, not only would much loss of time and needless writing be saved, but in the end a great many questions would be decided by minutes only, and without any formal correspondence at all, which should be confined, as much as possible, to points involving matters of principle and decisions relating to general questions.

This system might easily be carried out by a little consideration on the part of both Offices, and by care as to the tone in which minutes are written, which is in itself very desirable.

DE GREY.

ENDORSEMENT: Copy of Minute, as altered, and sent on *officially* to the Rt. Hon. S. Herbert, M.P., in Dec. 1860.



## APPENDIX V

### THE EDUCATION ACT (1870)—THE AGREEMENT WITH LORD SALISBURY

(Vol. I, pp. 235-36)

[PRIVATE]

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, *14th October, 1870.*

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—I spoke to you just before the Prorogation about the course which the National Society would be likely to take after the passing of the Education Act, and you told me that you would be ready to co-operate with me in any attempt to work the Act as considerately as I could for the schools connected with the Society. The time has now come when the Society must decide what they mean to do on an important and pressing point, and I therefore write to you.

As you are aware, the Act prohibits the making of any Building Grant after the 31st December next, and it is consequently necessary that applications for such grants should be made, where it is intended to build new schools or to enlarge old ones, without delay.

We of the Education Department have no power to alter the conditions on which these grants are given under the revised Code, as any new Minute which we might make with that view would require to be for four weeks before Parliament before it came into force, and would consequently be useless as regards operations which must be completed before the 31st December.

The National Society have therefore had to consider whether they would, in the exceptional circumstances of the present moment, admit into union and make grants to schools which in order to get Building Grants from the Committee of Council agreed to accept the conditions of the existing rules of the Department. I very much regret to find from Canon Gregory's letter that the Managers of the Society appear to have determined

to refuse aid to any school which admits the Conscience Clause hitherto required by the Education Department into its Trust Deed. It is no doubt satisfactory to hear that while they adhere to their former practice on this point, they are willing to allow schools in union with the Society to accept the Time Table Conscience Clause of the Act as a condition of receiving Annual Grants ; but I cannot doubt that there are many cases in which, if aid could be obtained *both* from the Government and the Society, a Church school might be built and the establishment of a School Board with its Cowper-Temple schools avoided, but where if a grant can only be got from *one* of these sources a sufficient sum will not be raised.

It seems therefore to me that the Society are acting very unwisely in refusing to modify the course which they have followed under very different circumstances, and that they are throwing away a great opportunity for the Church.

I am glad to see from an article in Wednesday's *Guardian* that this is the view taken by that newspaper, which may, I imagine, be supposed to represent the feelings of a large body of Churchmen.

Forster when he was in London a short time ago had one or two interviews with Mr. Hubbard and Canon Gregory ; but came to no conclusion with them. He thought, however, that Mr. Hubbard would have consented to allow the National Society Schools to insert in their Trust Deeds conditions similar to those in Section 7 of the new Act ; but Canon Gregory objected especially, as Forster understood, on the ground that the Managers would under Article 4 of that Section bind themselves to accept whatever the Education Department might embody in the Code for all future time.

I saw Forster at the end of last week and we talked the matter fully over, and being very desirous of meeting all that is fair in the wishes of the National Society, we determined on a step which goes to the very edge of our powers (if, between you and me, it does not overstep them) and to accept in lieu of the Conscience Clause hitherto in force a Clause in the Trust Deed framed in conformity with the three first articles only of Section 7 of the Act, thereby meeting Canon Gregory's objection about Article 4, which seemed to me a reasonable one.

I enclose you a copy of the letter which in consequence of this decision will be sent to-day, I hope, to the National Society,

and I would strongly urge you to do all you can to get the Society to accept this proposal.

Forster and I *can* do no more, we have not the power ; and surely it would be very wrong to reject the aid of the Building Grant for Church Schools because the Managers are asked to acknowledge in their Trust Deed the actual provisions of the Law, which are the conditions on which alone they can get an annual grant, and to which they must conform as soon as their school is built.

There is a letter from Mr. Hubbard in the last *Guardian* which gives me hopes that our present proposal will not be rejected. I did not see it till after the letter of which I enclose a copy was prepared ; but I see no reason to alter the draft, which goes very near to Mr. Hubbard's own views.

In the interest of the National Society itself the refusal of our offer would, I am sure, be a great mistake.

They complain that their appeal has not been answered, as it should have been.

The course they have already taken has, I am confident, induced many to hold back from subscribing, and if they persist in it even after what we now propose they will lose much support, and what is more they will throw away a great opportunity for enabling the Church to retain and extend the hold which her great efforts have enabled her to obtain on the education of the country.

What a terrible yarn I have inflicted on you ! You will see from its tone that it is meant only for yourself, but you are quite at liberty to communicate the substance of it in any quarter where you think it would be useful to do so.

It will be a great gratification to me if I can settle this matter satisfactorily.

You will see that time presses very much.

Yours sincerely, DE GREY.

[PRIVATE]

HATFIELD HOUSE, HATFIELD, HERTS, Oct. 15th, 1870.

MY DEAR DE GREY,—Thanks for your letter just received. Monday and Tuesday are Quarter Sessions days ; but I will go up on Wednesday and see what can be done. I can quite understand the difficulty felt by the National Society. The

working of the new Conscience Clause is an experiment. It may have the effect of banishing religious education altogether. I do not the least believe that it *will*: but it may. The Society are therefore afraid of joining in erecting school-buildings which may become merely secular: because they cannot draw back from a trust deed, as they can from the terms of an annual grant given from year to year. But I agree with you that this danger is smaller than that of handing the parish over to the School-board: and I will do what I can to persuade them to think so. It is possible that the Society may wish to reserve to themselves the power of deciding on each case individually—whether it is one that they would care to assist under the terms of a Conscience Clause. Where there is a large Dissenting population—in Wales for instance—it would be hopeless to preserve any religious teaching with such clause. It would only work tolerably where the Church had a good majority of the population.

I will write to you again when I hear more.

Yours very truly, SALISBURY.

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 17/10/70.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—Many thanks for your letter. It is true, as you say, that it is possible to conceive that the Time Table Conscience Clause *might* be used to banish religious education altogether; but practically, I think, there need be no fear on that score.

The only mode in which it could be so employed would be by the time for religious teaching being so reduced by the Education Department as to be rendered altogether illusory; but this would be so flagrant an abuse of power that I feel sure that if we were to have a Government which would venture upon it and would be supported by a majority of the House of Commons in such a course, they would find it far simpler and easier to adopt a more direct method of attack and to establish openly a general system of secular education under School Boards.

As a matter of fact, therefore, I do not dread so great an abuse of the Time Table Conscience Clause, but I do dread the loss for the Church of the present opportunity, which seems to me to be of a highly favourable character.

DE GREY.

[PRIVATE]

HATFIELD HOUSE, HATFIELD, HERTS, *October 19th, 1870.*

MY DEAR DE GREY,—You will have received by the London post of this evening a Clause which is the result of our discussions this morning at the National Society's office. At first their view was to offer to put into the trust deed a provision that if the Time Conscience Clause was disregarded the *Annual* Grant would be forfeited. I represented to them that this could not possibly satisfy you, as your desire was to get security that, in mixed districts, the *Building* Grant should benefit Dissenters as well as Churchmen. Their reply was that they had no insuperable objection to admitting the new Conscience Clause into their trust deeds on this occasion, but for one difficulty. The Clause provides that the time tables shall be approved by the Council. This might be made an instrument, under less happy auspices, of ousting religious teaching altogether. On this point they were inflexible. After a great deal of discussion, I drew up the proviso which you have got, to the effect that if at any time the Managers and the Council disagree on the subject of the time table, it shall be lawful for the Managers to return the Building Grant and thus to be free of the clause. To this they assented: and I have no doubt that if you intimate a willingness to accept it, the Committee of the Society will formally propose it.

I think you ought to accept—for it meets your fundamental requirement that Government money shall only go to the support of schools which are open to all. It is a clause which in practice will be inoperative—for I agree with you that it is exceedingly unlikely that Mr. Winterbotham, if he should attain to your present office, will adopt so gratuitously offensive a mode of establishing secular education: and the penalty on the Managers is quite sufficient to prevent them quarrelling without good cause. Anyhow, the Government money will return to the Treasury the moment that it ceases in the judgment of the Government to secure fair play to the Dissenters. But the clause has the advantage of providing an honourable bridge of retreat from a position which the chances of war have rendered untenable.

I hope that no merely technical difficulty will prevent you from accepting.

I have to inflict on you a letter on the connection between the Revised Code and scarlet—but I will reserve it.

Yours very truly, SALISBURY.

[PRIVATE]

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 21/10/70.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—I was in London yesterday and therefore did not get your letter of the 19th till my return here to-day. I start for Balmoral to-night for a Council, so that I have only time to thank you very much for the trouble you have so kindly taken to render an arrangement with the National Society possible.

I shall meet Forster at Balmoral and will talk the matter over with him, and let you know the result of our consultation as soon as possible. I am hopeful.

DE GREY.

Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House, Hatfield.

[PRIVATE]

BALMORAL CASTLE, 23.10.70.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—Forster and I have considered the Clause suggested by your Committee of the National Society, and I am glad to say that we shall be ready to accept it, provided the Legal Advisers of our Department see no legal objection to it, which I do not anticipate.

I shall therefore send it to London by this post with directions that it should at once be submitted to the Secretary, and I hope to be able in a day or two to tell you that, if it is proposed to me by the National Society, it will be accepted on our part.

I return to Studley Royal, Ripon, to-morrow.

Yours sincerely, DE GREY.

[PRIVATE]

STUDLEY ROYAL, RIPON, 27/10/70.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—Mr. Lumley wishes the last proviso in the National Society's to be worded as in the enclosed paper. The meaning is precisely the same, but the words are more correct. There will, I trust, therefore be no difficulty in adopting

this form, and if you telegraph to me here to that effect after communication with the Committee of the National Society, I will at once direct Sandford to agree to the proposal as soon as it is received officially from the Society, without further reference.

Yours sincerely, DE GREY.

Marq. of Salisbury, Hatfield House, Hatfield.

[ENCLOSURE]

AND IT IS HEREBY DECLARED that the said School shall be conducted as a Public Elementary School in accordance with the following regulations, a copy of which shall be conspicuously exhibited, viz. :—

- (1) It shall not be required, as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in the School, that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday School, or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the School or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent, or that he shall, if withdrawn by his parent, attend the School on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.
- (2) The time or times during which any religious observance is practised or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the School shall be either at the beginning or at the end of, or at the beginning and the end of, such meeting, and shall be inserted in a time table to be approved by the Education Department, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every schoolroom ; and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent from such observance or instruction without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the School.
- (3) The School shall be open at all times to the inspection of any of Her Majesty's Inspectors, so, however, that it shall be no part of the duties of such Inspector to inquire into any instruction in religious subjects given at such school or to examine any scholar therein in religious knowledge or in any religious subject or book.

PROVIDED that if any difference of opinion shall arise between the Managers of the School and the Education Department with reference to the Time Table aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the Managers to repay within six months the amount of the building grant received from the Privy Council, and thereupon the whole of this clause shall be void and of no effect.

HURSLEY PARK, WINCHESTER, *Oct. 30, 1870.*

MY DEAR DE GREY,—There is no telegraph in these wilds—and this will probably reach you as soon as a telegram sent to Winchester to-morrow.

The National Society people assent to Mr. Lumley's version of the proposed proviso: and I believe a Special Meeting has been summoned to sanction the formal proposal of it to the Privy Council. If you will send word to Sandford to accept I hope the whole affair will be concluded in two or three days. I am very glad that there is in this case peace without any capitulation.

I hear great apprehensions expressed that there will be a famine of schoolmasters. I hope you will move cautiously in dealing with the rural districts so as not to raise their price inordinately. If it once rises it will take a long time to go down again. Great caution in respect to this matter will be necessary: for the conditions of the trade are that you may order us to buy as many as you please, while the supply commodity depends in a great degree on you.

Yours very truly, SALISBURY.

[PRIVATE]

S.R., R., 31.10.70.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—Many thanks for your letter. I'm extremely glad to have been able to come to an arrangement with the National Society which will, I hope, enable the Committee to take full advantage of the Act of last Session. I only wish that the settlement had been made earlier.

I've sent word to Sandford to pass the proposal, as now agreed upon, as soon as possible after it is received from the National Society.

There is great truth in what you say about the supply of schoolmasters. I'll not fail to bear it in mind.

Yours sincerely, DE GREY.

I am going to London on Wednesday.



[PRIVATE]

HATFIELD HOUSE, HATFIELD, HERTS, *Nov. 3, 1870.*

MY DEAR DE GREY,—Only one line to thank you for your letter, and to express my regret that Gregory should have so far mis-stated what has taken place in the paper this morning as to have described the new Clause as being proposed *by* the Privy Council. I do not imagine it is a point by which you will lay much store; but any inaccuracy in such matters is disagreeable.

Yours very truly, SALISBURY.

[PRIVATE]

1 CARLTON GARDENS, S.W., 5/11/70.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—Thanks for your letter. Canon Gregory's inaccuracy does not signify unless it leads to Forster's having to contradict his statement in answer to the question of some Leaguer in the House of Commons, which I should regret.

In their official letter the National Society asked us to extend the new arrangement to existing schools by endorsement on their Deeds; but Lumley, I am sorry to say, tells us that it cannot be done, and we have therefore been obliged to decline. It is not, however, of much importance, as almost all the cases of existing schools would relate to enlargement grants, not full building grants, and can therefore be met with less difficulty from local or diocesan funds, aided by a grant from the National Society.

I am very glad to have been able to sign an honourable peace with the National Society, and am very much obliged to you for your assistance in the matter, without which I should have failed.

DE GREY.

Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House, Hatfield.

## APPENDIX VI

### LORD RIPON'S RESIGNATION IN 1873

(Vol. I, pp. 277-83)

#### *Memorandum on my Retirement from Mr. Gladstone's Government in August 1873*

I WAS absent at Cannes in consequence of my son's accident when, after the defeat of the Irish University Bill, Mr. Gladstone's Government resumed office on account of the refusal of Mr. Disraeli to form an Administration. Mr. Forster telegraphed to me to ask whether I would return to office, and I replied by telegram in the affirmative, asking to retain my former post.

At the same time I wrote to Mr. Forster on the 18th of March to point out that there were two questions on which I thought it possible that the policy of the Government might undergo some changes to which I could not be a party—these questions were Secular Education and the Extension of the Household Franchise to Counties. Mr. Forster in replying to this letter informed me that he had shown it to Mr. Gladstone.

I returned to England on the 28th of March, and I heard nothing at the Cabinet or from Mr. Gladstone on the subject of the extension of the Franchise, beyond a passing allusion on one occasion to the date which was fixed for the Second Reading of Mr. Trevelyan's Bill, until Saturday the 19th of July, when the course to be taken upon that Bill upon the following Wednesday was discussed in the Cabinet, and it was understood that although Mr. Gladstone would support the measure, individual members of the Cabinet were in no way to be committed to it.

On that Wednesday, the 23rd of July, Mr. Gladstone was ill; but he requested Mr. Forster to communicate to the House of Commons his approval of Mr. Trevelyan's Bill and his belief that the extension of the Franchise proposed in it could not long be delayed. This message produced considerable sensation in the House, and it was regarded on both sides as a declaration of policy, if not on the part of the Government as a whole, at

least on that of the Prime Minister as Leader of the Liberal Party. The Press the next morning was, so far as I saw, unanimous in putting this interpretation upon Mr. Gladstone's declaration.

Under these circumstances, I wrote on the 24th of July to Mr. Gladstone a letter in which I explained that I entertained a very strong objection to the contemplated reopening of the question of Parliamentary Reform at the present time, and asked him to consider whether it might not be for the advantage of the Government that I should resign at the end of the Session without assigning any reason of a public nature, rather than be forced a few months later to retire from the Government upon an acknowledged difference with my colleagues. I indicated that I should myself prefer to resign at once; but I distinctly stated that I wished to take whatever course consistent with my views on the subject of further Parliamentary Reform Mr. Gladstone might wish.

The Cabinet met that afternoon. Just before business commenced I was called out by Lord Fredk. Cavendish, who told me that Mr. Gladstone had sent him to say that he was much obliged to me for my letter; but hoped that, as he was not well and much pressed with business, I would excuse his not replying to it for a day or two. I begged Lord F. Cavendish to assure Mr. Gladstone that I hoped he would not hurry himself to send me an answer.

During the Cabinet Mr. Gladstone came up to me and said that he trusted that I would not mind his not answering my letter for a few days, and I said that I was in no hurry for an answer.

Lord Wolverton called on me on Sunday the 3rd of August, and in the course of conversation told me that Mr. Gladstone had been much touched by my letter and regarded it as of a most friendly kind. Mr. Forster had previously spoken to me to the same effect.

On the evening of Monday, 4th August, I received a request from Mr. Gladstone to call upon him the next morning, and I went to his house at 12.m. on the 5th, when, after thanking me for my letter and speaking of it in very high terms, he told me that he had reluctantly come to the conclusion that it would be better that he should accept the offer contained in it and that I should resign at once. Mr. Bright, he said, had consented

to join the Government, and although he had made no conditions whatever when doing so, he entertained a very strong opinion in favour of the extension of Household Suffrage to Counties and would of course exert the whole weight of his influence in the Cabinet in favour of that measure. Mr. Gladstone then went on to say that he thought that under these circumstances my resignation now would produce the least separation between me and the Government or the Party, and was therefore to be preferred to my retirement at a later period with distinct reference to the question of Parliamentary Reform.

He then went on to say that he considered it absolutely necessary after what had taken place recently with respect to the Treasury, etc., that a considerable reconstruction of the Administration should take place—that Mr. Lowe should leave the Exchequer and go to another Department, that the Department to which it was proposed to transfer him was the Home Office, and that in order to make a vacancy in that Department Mr. Bruce had consented to accept a Peerage and to take my office, having, however, in the handsomest manner, at the same time, expressed his readiness to retire altogether from office if Mr. Gladstone desired it.

I replied that I would have been quite ready to retain my office until the question of Parliamentary Reform had been actually decided by the Cabinet in a sense unfavourable to my views; but that I agreed with Mr. Gladstone in thinking that my retirement now would prevent even the appearance of a breach between me and the Government which it might be impossible at a later period to avoid, and that it was a pleasure to me to find that by resigning now I could facilitate the reconstruction of the Government which Mr. Gladstone was desirous of effecting.

A good deal more passed in our conversation with respect to the position of the Government and to other official changes which were in contemplation; but the above is the substance of what was said on the subject of my retirement.

I heard afterwards both from Lord Halifax and Lord Wolverton that Mr. Gladstone considered that I had acted in a most friendly and considerate manner towards him and the Government; indeed, Lord Wolverton told me that he had said: "Three men, Bright, Bruce, and Ripon, have behaved like angels."

R. 7/8/73.

## APPENDIX VII

### THE ILBERT BILL

(Vol. II, pp. 136-40)

*Note by Mr. R. Brett to Lord Hartington as to Sir H. Maine's  
Minute on the Ilbert Bill*

#### CRIMINAL JURISDICTION OVER EUROPEAN BRITISH SUBJECTS OUTSIDE THE RESIDENCY TOWNS

WAR OFFICE, 1883.

LORD HARTINGTON,—In his private letter to the Sec. of State of 4th March Lord Ripon observes in reference to the objection against Ilbert's Bill :

“ You will know whether it [i.e. the Bill] met with any opposition at the I.O. All I can say is that Hartington never told me that any opposition had been raised to it there, and I am certain that if any important Members of this Council had told him that the proposal of such a measure would be likely to stir up all the passions which have been in fact aroused, he would either have advised me to drop the matter, or would at least have given some hint of the fears which had been expressed to him. He never did anything of the kind, and therefore I imagine that the Members of the India Council were gifted with no more foresight than the local Governments in India or the Members of my Council.”

What occurred at the India Office was this.

At the end of September, Lord Ripon's letter, dated the 8th inst., gave you the earliest information of the proposed change in the Law. In that letter he said nothing to lead you to suppose that there would be any agitation in India against the change.

He merely described how the proposal originated in an amendment moved to the Criminal Procedure Bill by a Native member of the Legislative Council, to whom Lord Ripon gave a pledge that the subject should have the consideration of the Government.

The despatch from India asking leave to introduce the bill

to carry out the change was dated Sept. 9th, and was put forward with the departmental minute on 16th October.

Mr. Macpherson in putting forward the despatch—

“submitted that the sanction asked for should be given. The question (he added) is no doubt one of some delicacy, and the raising it may possibly cause a good deal of discussion in India,”

and he then goes on to point out the reasons in favour of the measure.

Before sending the papers on to the Committee, you wrote to Sir Henry Maine—who was then in Paris—and your letter, together with the papers, were sent to him for his opinion.

In your letter to Sir H. Maine of October 19th you used the following expressions :

“There seems to be a very general agreement among the authorities who have been consulted ; and probably the Council will not be inclined to oppose the proposals of the Govt. of India. But the question is one of some delicacy and may lead to some discussion and excitement among Europeans in India, and it seems to me to be very close to another still more delicate question which it would not be at all desirable to stir if it can be avoided.

I refer to the great distinction between Europeans and Natives in respect of the judicial powers over them which can be exercised by Magistrates and Judges.”

On the 22nd Oct. Sir Henry Maine returned the Papers with a Minute which commenced thus :

“These proposals of the Govt. of India are less serious than I expected to find them from rumours which I had heard.”

He then proceeded to point out the effect of the proposed change, and expressed his own preference for the “cautious and sensible modification” proposed by Mr. Hope.

“But [he goes on to say] it would be very difficult for the Secretary of State to oppose a scheme of the Govt. of India, thus backed by the Local Govts. Almost all opinion in England would be in favour of it ; and the Home Govt. of India has repeatedly pointed out the equality of the races as a principle of legislation to be always kept in view.

The few objections, if they exist, to the measure can only be judged of in India. The question is not a practical one (by

which I do not mean that it is not important). It is a question of sentiment, and there is a competition of sentiments. The natives feel, or profess to feel, humiliated by the race-distinction affecting the powers of the Judges. The Europeans are alarmed, or affect to be alarmed, at the new power given to Natives of bringing race-hatred to bear on them. The great explosions of European feeling have generally had this class of question for their pretext. One cannot be quite sure that the present moderate proposal may not provoke one, and then the consideration will arise whether the game was worth the candle."

Sir H. Maine went on to advocate Mr. Hope's plan, and to suggest that the Viceroy should be privately warned of the "seriousness of an European explosion," and that he should consult some of the non-officials about this, "say the Advocate-General and the European members of the Legislative Council."

The papers together with this Minute went before the Committee on Nov. 1, and the draft despatch approving the introduction of the Bill was initialled by Sir Ashley Eden, Sir Wm. Morris, Sir R. Montgomery, and Mr. Drummond, on Nov. 11th.

And on the 5th of December it passed Council; and went to India by the mail of the 7th.

Meanwhile, in your private letter to the Viceroy of October 20th (after you had sent the paper to Sir H. Maine, but before you had seen his minute) you wrote as follows:—

"Maine is away, but I have sent him your despatch about the judicial powers of the Covenanted Civilians, and hope to have an answer before long. I do not think that there will be much objection raised here, but it is rather a delicate question. It was, I have no doubt, impossible to avoid dealing with it, but it seems to me to be dangerously close to another still more delicate and difficult question, which is the distinction between the judicial powers exercised by Judges and Magistrates over Europeans and Natives respectively. I am afraid that if the English Press takes up the discussion of the proposed measure, the Native Press will probably take up in reply the larger question, which may not be altogether convenient."

I cannot find any further reference to this subject until Lord Ripon's letter to Lord Kimberley of March 4th which I have quoted at the beginning of this note.

R. B.

APPENDIX VIII  
IMPERIAL TARIFF PREFERENCES<sup>1</sup>

(Vol. II, pp. 218-21)

*The Marquess of Ripon to the Governor-General of Canada, the Governors of the Australasian Colonies (except Western Australia), and the Governor of the Cape.*

MY LORD,

DOWNING STREET, June 28, 1895.

SIR,—In my despatch of the 13th of December last I transmitted to you copies of the Report of the Earl of Jersey, G.C.M.G., on the proceedings at the Colonial Conference at Ottawa, together with copies of the proceedings of the Conference.

2. Since then the questions discussed at the Conference have been under the consideration of the various Departments specially concerned, and I am now in a position to place you in possession of the general views of Her Majesty's Government on the questions which formed the subject of the three Resolutions classed together by Lord Jersey as dealing with trade relations.

3. The first two of these Resolutions have for their object the repeal of legislation and the cancelling of treaty stipulations which, in the opinion of the Delegates, obstruct the realization of the policy indicated in the third Resolution, and it may be convenient that I should in the first instance explain the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to that policy before discussing the first two Resolutions.

4. The third Resolution declares that: "Whereas the stability and progress of the British Empire can be best assured by drawing continually closer the bonds that unite the Colonies with the Mother Country, and by the continuous growth of a practical sympathy and co-operation in all that pertains to the common welfare :

"And whereas this co-operation and unity can in no way be more effectually promoted than by the cultivation and extension of the mutual and profitable interchange of their products ;

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Parl. Paper, "Ottawa Conference, 1894" [C.—7824].



“ Therefore resolved : That this Conference records its belief in the advisability of a Customs arrangement between Great Britain and her Colonies by which trade within the Empire may be placed on a more favourable footing than that which is carried on with foreign countries.

“ Further resolved : That until the Mother Country can see her way to enter into Customs arrangements with her Colonies it is desirable that, when empowered so to do, the Colonies of Great Britain, or such of them as may be disposed to accede to this view, take steps to place each other's products in whole or in part on a more favoured Customs basis than is accorded to the like products of foreign countries.

“ Further resolved : That for the purposes of this Resolution the South African Customs Union be considered as part of the territory capable of being brought within the scope of the contemplated trade arrangements.”

5. With the preamble of this Resolution the feeling, not only of Her Majesty's Government, but of the entire population of this country, is, I need not say, in hearty sympathy—a sympathy to which no proposal clearly tending to promote the stability and progress of the Empire can appeal in vain.

6. The unanimity of sentiment which prevailed throughout the Conference on this point has been noted with pleasure by Her Majesty's Government, and it is with regret, therefore, that they feel compelled to express a grave doubt whether the fiscal policy the principle of which was adopted by the majority of the Conference, as a means of securing this object, is really calculated to promote it.

7. The Resolution does not advocate the establishment of a Customs Union comprising the whole Empire, whereby all the existing barriers to free commercial intercourse between the various members would be removed, and the aggregate Customs revenue equitably apportioned among the different communities. Such an arrangement would be in principle free from objection, and, if it were practicable, would certainly prove effective in cementing the unity of the Empire and promoting its progress and stability. But it was unanimously recognized by the Delegates that the circumstances of the Colonies make such a union, for the present at any rate, impossible ; and it is, therefore, unnecessary to discuss the practical difficulties which stand in the way of its realization.

8. The actual proposition is something essentially different, namely, the establishment of differential duties in this country in favour of Colonial produce, and in the Colonies in favour of the produce of the Mother Country. Commercial intercourse within the Empire is not to be freed from the Customs barriers which now impede it, but new duties, confined to foreign goods, are to be imposed where none exist at present, and existing rates of duty, now of impartial application, are to be either increased as against foreign trade or diminished in favour of British Colonial trade.

9. It was generally recognized at the Conference that this policy involves a complete reversal of the fiscal and commercial system which was deliberately adopted by Great Britain half a century ago, and which has been maintained and extended ever since. By a consistent adherence to this system one duty after another has been swept away in this country, until, at the present day, the few import duties remaining are retained, either for revenue purposes alone on articles not produced here, or in order to protect the Excise revenue.

10. A differential duty is open to all the objections from the consumer's point of view which can be urged against a general duty, and, while it renders necessary the same restrictions on trade, it has the additional disadvantage of dislocating trade by its tendency to divert it from its regular and natural channels.

11. These general objections to the policy advocated are sufficiently serious, and there are others, no less serious, which flow from the existing conditions under which the trade of the Empire is distributed.

12. Assuming that the preference aimed at by the Resolutions is given in the way most favourable to trade, namely, by the partial remission of existing duties in favour of British and Colonial goods, rather than by an increase of duties on foreign goods (coupled with the imposition of duties on goods of foreign origin now admitted free which compete with British and Colonial produce), it is obvious that, as the total trade of the Empire with foreign countries far exceeds the trade between the various members constituting the Empire, the volume of trade upon which taxation is to be placed exceeds the volume which would be partially relieved. The result would not only necessitate increased taxation but would involve a serious net loss of trade, the burden of which in both cases would fall with

greater severity on those parts of the Empire which have the largest proportion of foreign trade, and the loss to these parts would more than outweigh the gain to the other parts.

13. On closer examination it would appear that the material results of the proposal would be even more prejudicial than appear from the general statement of its more obvious results. In the case of this country, the bulk of the imports from foreign countries and almost the whole of our imports from the Colonies consists of food or raw materials for manufacture.

14. To impose a duty on food means at once a diminution of the real wages of the workman. If, in addition to this, a duty were imposed on raw materials, a further encroachment would have to be made on wages to enable the manufacturer to compete with his rivals in countries where there are no such duties.

15. The Honourable Mr. Foster, in his speech introducing the motion now under review, drew a vivid picture of the vigorous and unrelenting competition which the British manufacturer has to meet in the markets of the world ; and, if he somewhat over-estimated the results of that competition, there can be no question as to the fact that in many branches of trade in which Great Britain once held a distinct superiority other nations now compete on equal terms. In so far, then, as the British manufacturer failed to shift the burden of any duty on food and raw materials on to wages he would be at a disadvantage in the open markets of the world, and the remission in the Colonies of part of the duty in his favour would scarcely place him on level terms with his foreign competitor even there.

16. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that at present about one-fourth of the export trade of this country consists of foreign and Colonial produce, and that the imposition of duties on foreign produce would involve an enormous immediate outlay for the extension of bonding facilities, and the necessary charges for their use and maintenance. The result would be to place such obstacles in the way of this trade that its transference elsewhere would speedily take place, goods which this country now receives for re-export being sent direct to their market, or through some other entrepôt where they would not be subjected to such disabilities. Thus the position of this country as the great market of the world, already threatened, would be destroyed.

17. These changes could not fail to seriously injure our important carrying trade and to react injuriously on every industry in the United Kingdom.

18. On the other hand the gain to the Colonies, whatever it might be, would even at first be altogether incommensurate with the loss to the Mother Country. And it is improbable that there would be any permanent gain, for, apart from the general loss of purchasing power due to the fall in wages and profits resulting from the imposition of duties, it is obvious that the reduction of our imports from foreign countries would be followed by a reduction in our exports to them, no inconsiderable part of which consists of Colonial produce imported in a crude state and more or less manufactured in this country. The demand, therefore, for Colonial produce, even with the preferential advantage proposed to be allowed to it, would not be likely to increase, and the price obtained for it would, therefore, not be ultimately enhanced.

19. If the differentiation is to be confined to some specified articles, the difficulties of arriving at an equitable arrangement would be in no way diminished. Some of these difficulties were clearly pointed out by the representatives of New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, in the course of the discussion, and no practical standard was suggested by which the value of the concessions to be made on each side could be tried or adjusted. These would obviously vary according to the number of Colonies sharing in the arrangement and many other circumstances, and, as the people of this country and those of the Colonies would approach the consideration of the question from entirely different points of view, a satisfactory agreement would seem almost impossible. To this country it would mean a possible increase of revenue for a period, but at the same time a serious curtailment of trade, with loss of employment and enhanced price of food and other necessaries, and it would, in the main, be judged by its effect on our commerce and on the condition of the people.

20. To the Colonies, on the other hand, it would in the first instance mainly present itself as a question of revenue. A remission of duty on the bulk of their imports would involve an entire readjustment of their fiscal system, requiring the resort to increased direct taxation or other means; and though there might be at first an increase in the price of their produce imported

into this country, the revenue difficulty would probably appeal to them most strongly.

21. A consideration of these practical difficulties, and of the more immediate results above indicated, of a system of mutual tariff discrimination, has convinced Her Majesty's Government that, even if its consequences were confined to the limits of the Empire, and even if it were not followed by changes of fiscal policy on the part of foreign Powers unfavourable to this country, its general economic results would not be beneficial to the Empire. Such duties are really a weapon of commercial war, used as a means of retaliation, and inflicting possibly more loss on the country employing it than on the country against which it is directed, and which would not be likely to view them with indifference.

22. Foreign countries are well aware that the Colonies differ in their fiscal policies and systems from the Mother Country and each other, and if a policy of the kind advocated were adopted, our foreign rivals would not improbably retaliate, with results injurious to the trade of the whole Empire.

23. In the course of the discussion at the Conference the opinion was generally expressed that, although in present circumstances, while so large a proportion of the trade of Great Britain is with foreign countries, the arrangement might scarcely be acceptable to this country, the Colonial trade of Great Britain increases so much faster than the foreign that the conditions and proportions would be reversed at no very distant date, and the arguments now urged against the policy of the Resolution would no longer be regarded as valid.

24. As a matter of fact, however, the proportion of the Colonial trade of this country to its foreign trade is very nearly the same now as it was forty years ago.<sup>1</sup> The development of external trade does not always keep pace with the growth of

<sup>1</sup> Comparisons are only possible since 1854. For the five years 1854-8 the total imports into this country were £820,904,330; the imports from British possessions being £195,556,990, or 23·8 per cent. of the whole. During the five years 1889-93 the total imports were £2,112,252,916, and the imports from British possessions were £482,427,761, or 22·8 per cent. of the whole. The total exports during 1854-8 were £657,699,825, and the exports to British possessions £186,056,817, or 28·3 per cent. of the whole. During the period 1889-93 the total exports from this country were £1,521,736,951, of which the exports to British possessions were £438,491,542, or 28·8 per cent. Taking imports and exports together, the trade of this country with British possessions in the earlier of the two periods formed 28·5 per cent. of the total, and in the later 25·3 per cent.

population, more especially when it is subject to tariff restrictions either avowedly or incidentally protective, and although the Colonies have much room for expansion in the matter of population, and English capital has flowed into them perhaps more freely than into foreign countries, there is at present no appearance of any sustained alteration in the relative proportions of foreign and Colonial trade. But even if those proportions were reversed, Her Majesty's Government are convinced that the evil results of a preferential policy would be mitigated only slightly, although they might fall with less severity on this country and with greater severity on the Colonies than would be the case under existing circumstances.

25. I have dealt with this question at some length, because the strong support which the proposal met with from the majority of the representatives at the Conference entitles it to the fullest consideration, and renders it desirable to set forth the reasons which have satisfied Her Majesty's Government that it would fail to secure the object aimed at—namely, the stability and progress of the Empire.

26. I now pass to the second part of the Resolution, which urges "That until the Mother Country can see her way to enter into Customs arrangements with the Colonies, the Colonies should take steps to place each other's products in whole or in part on a more favoured Customs basis than is accorded to the like products of foreign countries."

This Resolution raises somewhat different issues from the preceding one. At first sight it would appear that this was a matter in which only the Colonies making such arrangements are themselves concerned, and that as Her Majesty's Government have allowed the Colonies full liberty to frame their fiscal systems with the view, if they think fit, of protecting their local industries, there can be no objection to their making arrangements to extend a somewhat similar protection or preference to those of a sister Colony.

27. It must be remembered, however, that the primary object of a differential duty is a diversion rather than an increase of trade, and that as the proportion of the external trade of most of the Colonies which is carried on with foreign countries is insignificant compared with that carried on with the Mother Country and other parts of Her Majesty's dominions it will be difficult for one Colony to give a preference in its markets to

the trade of another solely at the expense of the foreigner, and without at the same time diverting trade from the Mother Country or from sister Colonies which may not be parties to the arrangement.

28. Serious injury might thus be inflicted on the commerce of a neighbouring Colony, and unfriendly feelings generated, which might provoke retaliation, and would in any case estrange the Colonies concerned in a manner which would not conduce to the great aim which the Conference had in view throughout.

29. Any agreement for reciprocal preferential treatment between two Colonies will, therefore, require careful consideration in regard to its probable effect on the commerce of the rest of the Empire, and although Her Majesty's Government have the fullest confidence that the loyalty and good feeling happily prevailing between the various parts of the Empire would prevent one Colony seeking an advantage to itself which could only be gained at the serious prejudice of other parts of Her Majesty's dominions, it is impossible for them to relieve themselves of their responsibility in regard to the general interests of the Empire in such a matter.

30. The last part of the Resolution, which urges "That for the purposes of this resolution the South African Customs Union be considered as part of the territory capable of being brought within the scope of the contemplated trade arrangements," opens, as Lord Jersey has remarked in his Report, a prospect of additional complications.

31. The Orange Free State is a party to that arrangement, and if a Colony outside South Africa were to extend to the produce of that State preferential terms granted to the produce of the Cape Colony, Her Majesty's Government might, unless the same terms were extended to all countries entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment in that Colony, be involved in a serious controversy with those countries.

32. Having now indicated generally the views of Her Majesty's Government on the policy advocated by the Conference, I turn to the Resolutions which urged the removal of such obstacles, arising from legislation or Treaty, as impede the carrying out of that policy.

The only legislative obstacle to such arrangements as are contemplated by the Resolutions is the clause in the Constitution Acts of the Australian Colonies prohibiting the imposition

of differential duties. After full consideration Her Majesty's Government decided that, however much such duties might be inconsistent with the fiscal policy of this country, they should not, in so far as such duties can be imposed without breach of Her Majesty's Treaty obligations and without detriment to the unity of the Empire, interfere with the discretion of the Colonies in the matter. Parliament has, therefore, on the initiative of Her Majesty's Government, agreed to relieve the Australian Colonies of the special disabilities under which they were placed by the operation of their Constitution Acts, and, in consequence, has passed the Act of which copies are enclosed,<sup>1</sup> repealing the provisions referred to, and that Act has now received Her Majesty's assent.

33. In the case of the Colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, section 45 of the Constitution Act of the former and section 43 of the Constitution Act of the latter also prohibit the imposition of differential duties, but as the repeal of these provisions is now a matter within the competence of the local legislatures, Her Majesty's Government leave it to them to take the necessary action.

34. While, however, Parliament has thus removed all legislative restrictions on the Colonies, so far as the Imperial legislation is concerned, it will be necessary, in order that Her Majesty's Government may be in a position to give effect to their responsibility for the international obligations of the Empire, and for the protection of its general interests, that any Bill passed by a Colonial Legislature providing for the imposition of differential duties should be reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure, so as to allow full opportunity for its consideration from these points of view.

35. For this reason and in order to prevent inconvenience it will be desirable, if such duties are included in a General Tariff Bill, that a proviso should be added that they are not to come into force until Her Majesty's pleasure has been signified.

36. I may here point out that any Act such as that passed by the Legislature of New Zealand in 1870, which proposed to enable the Governor of the Colony in Council to suspend or modify any of the duties imposed by the Customs Duties Acts of the Colony, in accordance with any inter-colonial agreement, besides being open to grave objection on constitutional grounds, would deprive

<sup>1</sup> Australian Colonies Duties Act, 1895, 58 & 59 Vict., cap. 3.



Her Majesty's Government of any opportunity of considering such agreements, and unless, therefore, the articles to which the power should apply and the extent to which remission might be granted were specified, Her Majesty's Government would have grave doubts as to the propriety of advising Her Majesty to assent to such an Act. They trust, therefore, that the Colonial Legislatures will not seek to divest themselves in any measure of their power to fix the amount of their taxation, nor to confer on the Executive a power the exercise of which without the fullest deliberation might inadvertently give rise to serious complications not only with other Colonies but with foreign Powers.

37. The second Resolution states "That this Conference is of opinion that any provisions in existing Treaties between Great Britain and any foreign Power, which prevent the self-governing dependencies of the Empire from entering into agreements of commercial reciprocity with each other or with Great Britain, should be removed." The Treaties aimed at by this Resolution are the Commercial Treaties between this country and Germany and Belgium.

38. The particular Articles of these Treaties which might give rise to difficulties in regard to preferential arrangements between the various portions of the British Empire are as follows :

#### BELGIUM, ARTICLE XV

"Articles the produce or manufactures of Belgium shall not be subject in the British Colonies to other or higher duties than those which are or may be imposed upon similar articles of British origin."

"Les produits d'origine ou de manufacture belge ne seront pas grevés dans les Colonies Britanniques d'autres ou de plus forts droits que ceux qui frappent ou frapperont les produits similaires originaires de la Grand Bretagne."

The English and French texts are both given, as there is a shade of distinction in the translation of the word "British."

#### ZOLLVEREIN (German Empire)

##### ARTICLE VII

"The stipulations of the preceding Articles I to VI" (they contain the whole Treaty) "shall also be applied to the Colonies

and Foreign Possessions of Her Britannic Majesty. In those Colonies and Possessions the produce of the States of the Zollverein shall not be subject to any higher or other import duties than the produce of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or of any other country of the like kind; nor shall the exportation from those Colonies or Possessions to the Zollverein be subject to any higher or other duties than the exportation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

39. It is to be observed that any advantages which might be granted by Great Britain to either Belgium or Germany in virtue of these particular stipulations must also be extended to various other countries under the ordinary most-favoured-nation clauses in existing Treaties. If, however, Article XV of the Belgium Treaty and Article VII of the Zollverein Treaty were no longer in force, there are no stipulations of a similar character in any other Treaty concluded by this country and now in force which could give rise to the same difficulties.

40. The general effect of these stipulations in regard to import duties, as understood by Her Majesty's Government, is stated in the note on page 5 of Lord Jersey's Report as follows :

1. They do not prevent differential treatment by the United Kingdom in favour of British Colonies.
2. They do not prevent differential treatment by British Colonies in favour of each other.
3. They do prevent differential treatment by British Colonies in favour of the United Kingdom.

41. In regard to the first of the foregoing propositions, I may observe that, as will be gathered from what has been said above, the question of admitting Colonial produce into the United Kingdom on more favourable terms than the produce of foreign countries is a question which Her Majesty's Government are not at present prepared to take into consideration; and, if at any future time, it were to come into practical discussion it could be approached with equal freedom whether the Treaties with Belgium and the Zollverein were in force or not.

42. As regards the second proposition, the opinion formed by Her Majesty's Government as to the interpretations of Article XV of the Treaty with Belgium is in conformity with an opinion expressed by the Law Officers of the Crown, to the effect that the words "Similar articles of British origin," or in the French text

“ produits similaires originaires de la Grande Bretagne,” relate to the produce of the United Kingdom alone.

43. It must, however, be recollected that in the construction of any Treaty the interpretation of one of the parties alone does not necessarily prevail.

44. In regard to the third proposition, it seems clear that under the terms of Article XV of the Belgian Treaty, and of Article VII in the Treaty with the Zollverein, the British Colonies cannot grant to the produce of the United Kingdom any preferential treatment as to Customs duties without such treatment being also extended to Belgium and Germany, and through them to other countries which have ordinary most-favoured-nation clauses with Great Britain.

In these circumstances the question arises whether it is desirable—

- (a) To endeavour to obtain the abrogation of Article XV of the Belgian Treaty and of Article VII of the Zollverein Treaty separately, without the denunciation of the entire Treaties ; or
- (b) Failing the abrogation of these particular clauses alone, to denounce the Treaties themselves, which can be done by giving twelve months' notice.

45. In regard to the separate denunciation of these Articles, it may be stated that both the Belgium and German Governments have been asked whether they would consent to the abrogation of these particular clauses without the rest of the Treaties being terminated, and the reply in both cases was to the effect that the clauses could not be denounced apart from the rest of the Treaty.

46. Her Majesty's Government have no Treaty right to demand the abrogation of these Articles separately, and in view of these replies there would evidently be no use in further approaching either Government in this direction ; and the only method of getting rid of these clauses would be the denunciation of the Treaties themselves.

47. Such denunciation would be a step of the greatest gravity, and whilst Her Majesty's Government are fully alive to the desirability of removing any Treaty stipulations which may hamper the action of the Colonies in regard to trade relations, they consider that the advantages to be derived from such a step should be very clearly shown to outweigh the disadvantages before it could properly be resorted to.

48. It has been shown above that the United Kingdom could, if it were at any time judged proper, grant preferential terms to Colonial produce without infringing the particular Articles in question, and further that the British Colonies could also grant preferential treatment to each other without infringing them as they are interpreted by Her Majesty's Government. The only point, therefore, which remains for consideration is, whether the advantages to be derived from permitting the United Kingdom to enjoy preferential treatment in the British Colonies is sufficient to outweigh the disadvantages to the Empire of the denunciation of the entire Belgian and Zollverein Treaties.

49. The following figures may serve to indicate generally how the interests of the United Kingdom are affected.

The annual value of the exports from the United Kingdom, according to the Statistical Abstract, may be roughly estimated as having been in 1893 :

	£
To Germany . . . . .	28,000,000
To Belgium . . . . .	13,000,000
	<hr/>
Total . . . . .	£41,000,000
	<hr/>

The value of exports from the United Kingdom to all the self-governing Colonies for the same year may be roughly estimated at £35,000,000 (India not included).

The comparison would not be quite the same if accounts were taken of the exports of British and Irish produce only. Here it would seem that the exports from the United Kingdom to British self-governing Colonies exceed the exports to Belgium and Germany. The self-governing Colonies, moreover, being geographically distant, the exports to them give proportionately more employment to shipping than to exports to adjacent countries like Belgium and Germany. But the exports to Belgium and Germany are undoubtedly important in themselves.

50. The denunciation of the Treaties with Belgium and Germany would thus expose the trade of the United Kingdom to some risks, and might possibly be followed by a loss of some part of the export trade to those countries ; probably of some portion of it which consists in the distribution of foreign and Colonial produce. With the denunciation of the Treaties the commerce of the Empire with these countries would have to

be carried on under fiscal conditions subject to constant changes and fluctuations, or at all events without that permanence and security which is of primary importance to successful and profitable interchange. It would be extremely difficult, in existing circumstances, to negotiate new Treaties of a satisfactory character at an early date, and the loss which might in the meantime result to a trade of forty-one millions sterling would, perhaps, prove to be irreparable. On the other hand, no scheme has been proposed which foreshadows any precise advantage to be secured to the export trade, amounting to thirty-five millions sterling, from the United Kingdom to the British Colonies, in the event of the termination of these Treaties.

51. I may further observe that the self-governing Colonies themselves would lose any advantage they now derive from their inclusion in the German and Belgian Treaties; since, if those Treaties were denounced, both countries would, in view of the circumstances attending the passing of the Resolutions of the Colonial Conference and in view of the high tariffs existing in many of the Colonies, no doubt decline to include the British Colonies in any new Treaty that might be negotiated, and considering the small amount of their trade, it would be very difficult for them, if in an isolated position, to secure advantageous terms except by very heavy concessions. In this connexion it might be expedient for the self-governing Colonies themselves to consider how much their interests are involved. A large item in the exports from the United Kingdom to Belgium and Germany is "wool," about £8,000,000 in value, largely, there is no doubt, Colonial wool. Other articles of Colonial export also find a market in Belgium and Germany.

52. In these circumstances, as preferential arrangements in which this country should be included cannot, under present conditions, be considered a matter of practical politics, and as the clauses in the Treaties do not, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, prevent inter-colonial preferential arrangements, Her Majesty's Government consider that it would not be prudent to contemplate the denunciation of the Treaties at the present moment, bearing in mind that this could always be done on twelve months' notice, if circumstances should hereafter show it to be desirable.

53. In conclusion, it only remains for me to state that in the consideration of these questions the discussions at the Conference

have been of the greatest service to Her Majesty's Government. The discussion throughout was maintained at a high level, and the speeches were eminently practical and to the point, and I have observed with pleasure the unanimity which prevailed as to the importance and desirability in principle, not only of preserving but of strengthening the bonds of sentiment, sympathy, and mutual benefit which now unite the Empire. This was one of the main objects for which the Conference was summoned, and Her Majesty's Government are convinced that the result has been a substantial and permanent contribution to the establishment and maintenance of that mutual understanding and sympathy without which that Imperial union which we prize so highly can scarcely hope to be permanent.

I have, etc., RIPON.

*The Marquess of Ripon to the Governor-General of Canada, the Governors of the Australasian Colonies (except Western Australia), and the Governor of the Cape.*

[DOWNING STREET, June 28, 1895.]

MY LORD,

SIR,—In my despatch of even date,<sup>1</sup> I communicated to you an expression of the views of Her Majesty's Government on the Resolutions passed by the Colonial Conference at Ottawa in regard to the trade relations of the Empire.

2. In the course of the discussions there, a question of considerable importance was more than once alluded to, namely, the question of commercial agreements between Her Majesty's Government and foreign Powers in regard to their trade with the Colonies.

Such Conventions have already been made on more than one occasion in regard to the trade of Her Majesty's Dominions in North America with the United States of America, and recently with the Government of France in regard to the trade between that country and Canada; and the Cape Colony has also entered into a Customs Union with the neighbouring Independent Republic, the Orange Free State.

3. Although the area within which such agreements are possible is now but limited, owing to the network of commercial Treaties by which the nations are bound together, there are still some

<sup>1</sup> No. 1.

Powers, such as France, with which agreements of the kind could be made, either because no commercial Treaty exists between them and this country, or because some of the Colonies have not adhered to the existing Treaty. It appears desirable, now that the same liberty of tariff legislation has been accorded to the Australian Colonies as has been enjoyed by Canada, the Cape Colony, and New Zealand, and that the Colonies generally are considering the question of extending and increasing their external commerce, that the views of Her Majesty's Government on this question should be generally known.

4. In the first instance it is advisable that the international position of such agreements and the procedure to be followed in regard to them should be made clear, and in this connexion I desire to quote from the able speech delivered by Sir Henry Wrixon at the meeting of the Conference on the 10th of June.

5. Referring to this question, he said—

“I do not know that I have ever thoroughly understood the position which the Imperial Government takes with regard to the power which they have already allowed to Canada and the Cape, because we all know that nations can only know one another through the supreme head. Each nation is an entity as regards any other nation, and I have no knowledge of how you could recognize a part of an Empire making arrangements for itself. If you look at the thing in the last resort, supposing conflicts arose, or cause of war, the foreign Power that had cause to complain of the breach of a commercial Treaty must naturally look to the head of an Empire, and they could not be put off by telling them to look for satisfaction to the dependency. If any foreign Power made an arrangement with the Cape, and had cause to complain, and wanted to enforce any proviso, they must go to the Empire of Great Britain; and, therefore, as far as I can understand it, I am quite against any attempt to recognize the right of a dependency of the Empire to act on its own behalf. Everything must be done through the head of the Empire when we are dealing with foreign nations. One nation is one individual, and it can only deal with other nations on that basis; therefore I deliberately excluded any reference in my motion to that subject, and I may only add that I think it is quite unnecessary to refer to it, because we can have no doubt that the Imperial Government will extend the same consideration to all the dependencies of the Empire that it has

already extended to Canada and the Cape, if in any case any dependency of the Empire shows that it has good ground for entering into a commercial Treaty outside. I have not the slightest doubt that the Imperial Government would do for other dependencies what it has already done for the premier dependency of Canada and the Cape.

"HON. MR. FITZGERALD.—Do you wish it done by legislation ?

"SIR HENRY WRIXON.—No. I do not understand how it can be done, because I have no idea of a nation as anything else than one complete unity with regard to an outside nation, and I cannot understand a dependency of the Empire arranging with an outside Power ; and I presume, where the Imperial Government has allowed Canada and the Cape to make arrangements, the Imperial Government itself has contracted and would be prepared to vindicate the conduct of the dependency in the last resort. I understand that when occasion arises the dependency informs the Imperial Government of its desire to enter into certain arrangements. The Imperial Government authorizes its Minister at the Court of the Power which is to be treated with to carry on that negotiation, and then, technically, it is the Empire which makes the Treaty. In our country some claimed more than this right. I repudiated any such position. I think it is not consistent with the unity of the Empire, and I added to that a reason why it was unnecessary—namely, because the Imperial Government will do for us what they have done for Canada and the Cape, and will help us to make a Treaty, if we want to make a Treaty, with any foreign Power."

6. This speech not only indicates the procedure to be followed in the case of such arrangements, but clearly explains the reasons for it. A foreign Power can only be approached through Her Majesty's Representative, and any agreement entered into with it affecting any part of Her Majesty's dominions is an agreement between her Majesty and the Sovereign of the foreign State, and it is to Her Majesty's Government that the foreign State would apply in case of any question arising under it.

7. To give the Colonies the power of negotiating Treaties for themselves without reference to Her Majesty's Government would be to give them an international status as separate and sovereign States, and would be equivalent to breaking up the Empire into a number of independent States, a result which Her Majesty's Government are satisfied would be injurious



equally to the Colonies and to the Mother Country, and would be desired by neither.

The negotiation, then, being between Her Majesty and the Sovereign of the foreign State must be conducted by Her Majesty's Representative at the Court of the foreign Power, who would keep Her Majesty's Government informed of the progress of the discussion, and seek instructions from them as necessity arose.

It could hardly be expected, however, that he would be sufficiently cognisant of the circumstances and wishes of the Colony to enable him to conduct the negotiations satisfactorily alone, and it would be desirable generally, therefore, that he should have the assistance, either as a second Plenipotentiary or in a subordinate capacity, as Her Majesty's Government think the circumstances require, of a delegate appointed by the Colonial Government.

If, as the result of the negotiations, any arrangement is arrived at it must be approved by Her Majesty's Government and by the Colonial Government, and also by the Colonial Legislature if it involves legislative action, before the ratifications can be exchanged.

8. The same considerations which dictate the procedure to be followed have also dictated the conditions under which, though never distinctly formulated, Her Majesty's Government have hitherto conducted such negotiations, and as to the propriety of which they are confident that no question can be raised.

9. These considerations are : the strict observance of existing international obligations, and the preservation of the unity of the Empire. The question, then, to be dealt with is how far these considerations necessarily limit the scope and application of any commercial arrangement dealing with the trade between one of Her Majesty's Colonies and a foreign Power, both in respect of the concessions which may be offered by the Colony and the concessions which it seeks in return.

10. It is obvious that a Colony could not offer a foreign Power tariff concessions which were not at the same time to be extended to all other Powers entitled by Treaty to most-favoured-nation treatment in the Colony. In the Constitution Acts of some Colonies such a course is specifically prohibited, but, even where that is not the case, it is obvious that Her Majesty could not properly enter into any engagements with a foreign Power in-

consistent with her obligations to other Powers, and before any Convention or Treaty can be ratified; therefore, Her Majesty's Government must be satisfied that it fulfils this condition, and also that any legislation for giving effect to it makes full provision for enabling Her Majesty to fulfil her obligations, both to the Power immediately concerned and to any other Powers whose rights under Treaty may be affected. To do otherwise would be a breach of public faith to which Her Majesty's Government could not lend themselves in any way.

Further, Her Majesty's Government regard it as essential that any tariff concessions proposed to be conceded by a Colony to a foreign Power should be extended to this country and to the rest of Her Majesty's dominions.

As I have already pointed out, there are but few nations with which Her Majesty's Government have not Treaties containing most-favoured-nation clauses, and to most of these Treaties all or some of the Responsible Government Colonies have adhered. Any tariff advantages granted by a Colony, therefore, to a foreign Power would have to be extended to all Powers entitled by Treaty to most-favoured-nation treatment in the Colony, and Her Majesty's Government presume that no Colony would wish to afford to, practically, all foreign nations better treatment than it accorded to the rest of the Empire of which it forms a part.

II. This point has already arisen in connexion with negotiations on behalf of Colonies with foreign States. When informal discussions with a view to a commercial arrangement between the United States of America and Canada took place in 1892, the delegates of the Dominion Government refused the demand of the United States that Canada should discriminate against the produce and manufactures of the United Kingdom, and the negotiations were broken off on this point. Similarly, when Newfoundland, in 1890, had made preliminary arrangements for a Convention with the United States under which preferential treatment might have been accorded to that Power, Her Majesty's Government acknowledged the force of the protest made by Canada, and when the Newfoundland Government proposed to pass legislation to grant the concessions stipulated for by the United States, my predecessor, in a despatch dated the 26th of March 1892, informed the Dominion Government that they might rest assured "that Her Majesty will not be advised to assent to

any legislation discriminating directly against the products of the Dominion."

12. It must not be forgotten that, as I have pointed out in my other despatch of this date,<sup>1</sup> whilst the grant of preferential tariff treatment is a friendly act to the country receiving it, it is an unfriendly act to countries or places excluded from it, and Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the bonds which unite the various parts of the Empire together require that every Colony should accord to the rest at least as favourable terms as it grants to any foreign country. If a Colony were to grant preferential treatment to the produce of a foreign country and were to refuse to extend the benefit of that treatment to the Mother Country and the other Colonies, or some of them, such a step could not fail to isolate and alienate that Colony from the rest of the Empire, and attract it politically as well as commercially towards the favoured Power. Her Majesty's Government are convinced that the Colonies will agree that such a result would be fraught with danger to the interests of the Empire as a whole, and that they will also agree that it would be impossible for Her Majesty's Government to assent to any such arrangement.

13. In regard to the other side of the question, namely as to the terms which a Colony seeks from a foreign Power, the considerations mentioned appear to require that a Colony should not endeavour in such a negotiation to obtain an advantage at the expense of other parts of Her Majesty's dominions. In the case, therefore, of preference being sought by or offered to the Colony in respect of any article in which it competed seriously with other Colonies or with the Mother Country, Her Majesty's Government would feel it to be their duty to use every effort to obtain the extension of the concession to the rest of the Empire, and in any case to ascertain as far as possible whether the other Colonies affected would wish to be made a party to the arrangement. In the event of this being impossible, and of the result to the trade of the excluded portions of the Empire being seriously prejudicial, it would be necessary to consider whether it was desirable, in the common interests, to proceed with the negotiation.

14. Her Majesty's Government recognize, of course, that in the present state of opinion among foreign Powers and many of

<sup>1</sup> No. 1.

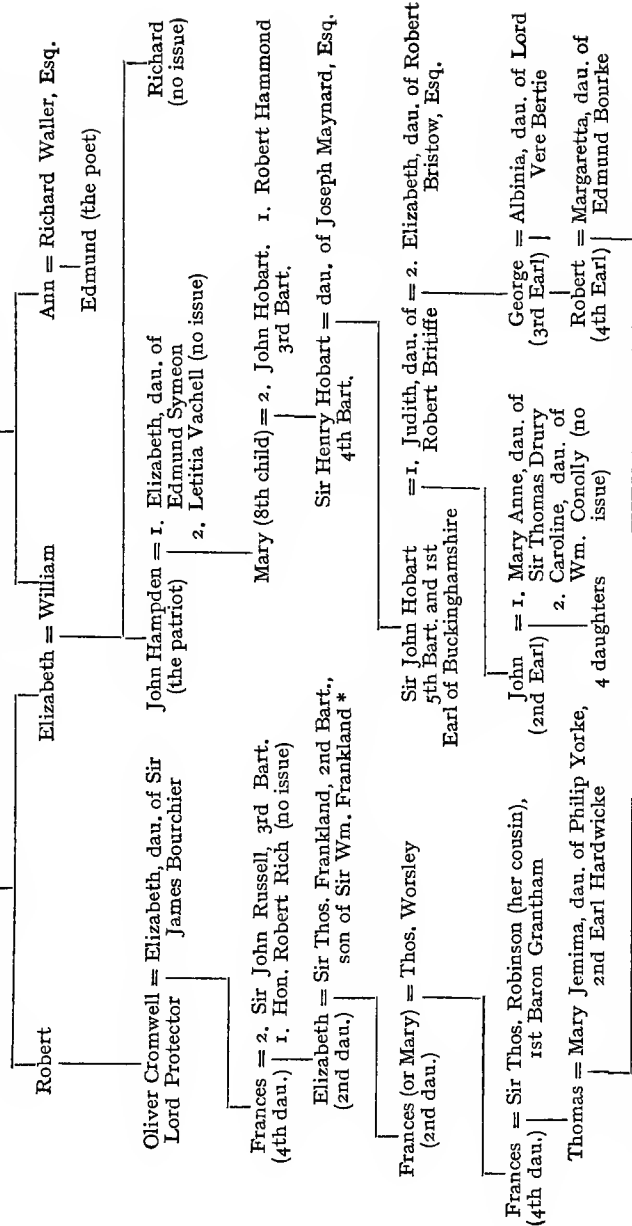
the Colonies as to differential duties, and in a matter which, to some extent, would affect only a particular Colony, they would not feel justified in objecting to a proposal merely on the ground that it was inconsistent in this respect with the commercial and financial policy of this country.

But the guardianship of the common interests of the Empire rests with them, and they could not in any way be parties to, or assist in, any arrangements detrimental to these interests as a whole. In the performance of this duty it may sometimes be necessary to require apparent sacrifices on the part of a Colony, but Her Majesty's Government are confident that their general policy in regard to matters in which Colonial interests are involved is sufficient to satisfy the Colonies that they will not without good reason place difficulties in the way of any arrangements which a Colony may regard as likely to be beneficial to it.

I have, etc., RIPON.

DESCENT OF THE MARQUESS OF RIPON FROM OLIVER CROMWELL AND JOHN HAMPDEN

Griffith Hampden, Esq.



[NOTE.—The above genealogy is extracted from James Waylen's *House of Cromwell*, Mark Noble's *Memoirs of the House of Cromwell*, and Burke's *Peerage*.]

[\* Sir William Frankland had married Arabella Bellaysse, sister of Viscount Fauconberg, husband of Mary Cromwell (3rd daughter of Oliver Cromwell). Thos Fauconberg was uncle to both bride and bridegroom.]

Frederick John, Visct. = Sarah Louisa Albinia Hobart, dau. of Robert, 4th Earl of Bucks — Goderich and Earl of Ripon — George Frederick Samuel = Henrietta Anne Theodosia, dau. of Capt. Henry Vyner Marquess of Ripon



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